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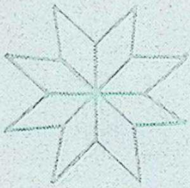
A study of Hindu ritual and myth among the Kangra Rajputs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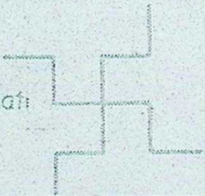

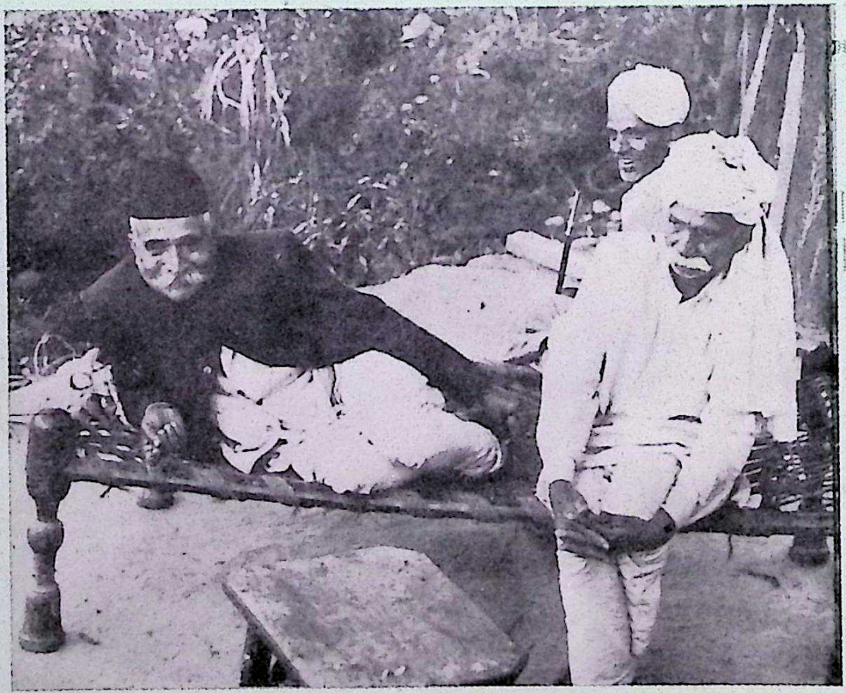

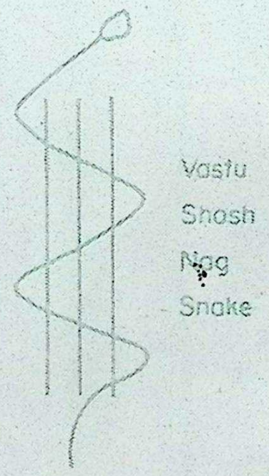
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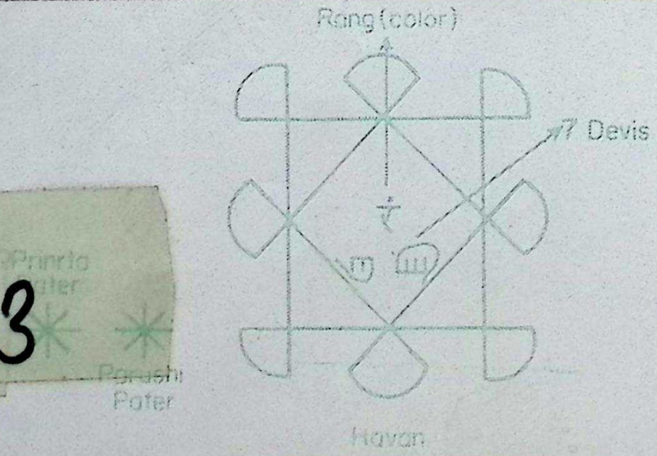
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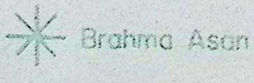
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A STUDY OF HINDU RITUAL AND MYTH AMONG THE
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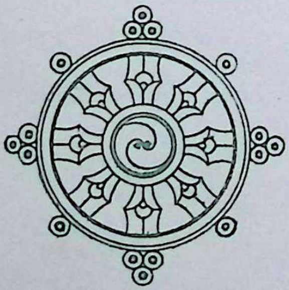

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Saints and Householders

A STUDY OF HINDU RITUAL AND MYTH AMONG THE KANGRA RAJPUTS

J. Gabriel Campbell

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TO MY COLLEAGUE AND WIFE

LYNN BENNETT

PREFACE

This book was originally submitted to the Department of Anthropology, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut as a Master's Thesis in 1971. At that time it represented the culmination of a specially designed program which involved one year's field work following the junior year. The program provided an opportunity for the kind of long-term field study not usually available in pre-doctoral curricula.

The identification of this book as a Master's Thesis is meant to serve as a partial disclaimer. The way I went about analyzing data in this book is not necessarily the way I would do it now. For example, the strictness with which I adhered to a kind of Levi-Straussian dialectic now strikes me as rather incautious and slightly misguided. But this is not to say that I think the results of this study are invalid or unimportant. In fact, I think it is precisely the enthusiasm with which I embraced the "new structuralism" which allowed me to uncover features of Hinduism and Kangra culture which would have remained opaque to a more cautious approach. In that sense, I stand by the contents of this book even while voicing some qualifications about its methodology.

Following the completion of the first draft of this study, I discovered the work of Dr. Wendy O'Flaherty. Her long article on "Asceticism and Sexuality in the Mythology of Siva" (1969) used an analytic technique similar to the one I had adopted and presented conclusions which were convergent with my own. Subsequent to my final draft, in which I was only able to refer to O'Flarherty briefly, she published the complete version of her study under the title *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva* (1973).

The transformation of this work from a thesis to a book is due entirely to the support and expert assistance I have received from Professor Theodore Riccardi Jr. of the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, Professor A. W. Macdonald of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, and Mr. Hallvard K. Kulöy, editor of the Bibliotheca Himalayica. In addition, Dr. Robert Levy, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego read the manuscript carefully and gave the benefit of his insightful criticism. The encouragement these Himalayan scholars freely give to students such as myself sets a high standard for which I hope we will be worthy. I am truly grateful.

I also wish to acknowledge the support and guidance I received at all times from Wesleyan University and from Baring Union Christian College in Batala, Punjab. Without the flexibility of these institutions and the enthusiastic help, stimulation, and criticism of my professors Dr. James Helfer, Dr. David McAllister, Dr. Ram Singh, and Dr. Francis Harwood the fieldwork

and the original thesis would never have materialized— nor would I have learned nearly as much as I have. To James Kalven, my friend, collegue, and fellow researcher in Kangra, I owe a debt of gratitude the extent of which only he can be aware. I wish also to thank my father, Ernest Y. Campbell, who not only instilled the anthropological instinct in me but was of invaluable assistance in setting up research in Kangra, as well as the Fritz von Schultess family for providing an idyllic setting for thesis-writing.

Finally, for their hospitality, patience, and generosity of spirit, I am forever grateful to my friends in Kangra. I wish especially to acknowledge the help of the following persons: Zaildar Anand Lal, Havildarji, Sri Raghbir Singh, Sri Kuldip Singh, Sri Pritvi Singh, Sri Mulkit Singh, Captain Sudarsan Patania, Pandat Jai Lal, Sri Balwant Singh, Sri Amar Singh, Sri Suba Ram, Masterji, Captain Moti Singh,Sri Bhagat Ram, Sri Rattan Chand,Sri Balia, and our cook, Phateh Singh who shared with us his small daughter Rajisuri. To these and all the others not listed, I owe a debt of thanks I can never repay. *Mai baharon aiiya; tusan minjo praa banaiiya.*

* * *

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTENT

This study is primarily concerned with aspects of structure and change in North Indian Hinduism as seen through the religious life of the people inhabiting the Kangra Valley. It is both ethnographic and analytical, though it does not attempt completeness in either area. That is, it seeks to be of value from two separate yet related viewpoints. On the one hand, there has been the effort to record new and more complete data on the religious life of the Kangra peoples, especially in the village of Sunhet. Drawing on this and supplementary material from the surrounding areas, the other and perhaps more important concern has been to discern and understand structural aspects of Hindu ritual, myth, and shamanism both as an end in itself and as a means of clarifying the kinds of changes rural Hinduism is undergoing.

The radical nature of this change as well as the tenacity of traditional attitudes can be clearly seen in the following excerpt from my notes:

> The Indian media followed the American moon landing very closely and it wasn't long after the event that villagers registered their reactions in a manner that strikingly demonstrated the diversity of current religius opinions.
>
> *old shaman* (*chela*): "It's a lie. If the Americans had reached the moon, the gods living there wouldn't have let them return."
>
> *old headman:* "It's no wonder they didn't find any gods — the gods are invisible there just as they are here."
>
> *resident ascetic:* "*Chandar*, the moon god, like all other gods, is only symbolic of Brahman, the *Paratma* (Greatest Soul)."
>
> *young man;* "The women will just have to stop worshiping the moon now. The Americans said there were only rocks and no gods."

As a locus of such disparate views, indicating not only the traditional beliefs, but various modes of adaptation and dissolution present in India today, Sunhet village offered a unique opportunity to study both at the same time. Thus, though each is a subject forbiddingly vast in itself, I have attempted to understand aspects of both the structure of traditional Hinduism and some of the changes that have occured within it in a belief that neither can be understood in isolation, and hoping to provide insight if not completeness. However, considerably more attention has been devoted to "structure" rather than to "change".

A. FIELD RESEARCH

As, I suppose, many young anthropoligists, James Kalven, my class mate and co-worker, and I had been quite anxious and concerned for some time prior to our research about the concrete and delicate problems of field work: how do we choose the area ? the village ? how do we arrive in the village ? what will be our role ? how can we be accepted by the people ? how do we go about the actual business of collecting information ? how will we live ? etc. In the belief that these questions are in some sense as important as the academic results, especially in a time when some of the academicians in developing countries are accusing Americans and Europeans of "Academic Imperialism"; and in the methodological belief that the means of collecting data is an inextricable part of the results, I have devoted the following few pages to the answers we found, or found ourselves in.

After a long and tedious motorcycle trip overland, several months of bureaucratic delay, and a major change in plans, we arrived in India in the Fall of 1968 under the helpful guidance of Dr. Ram Singh of Baring Union Christian College, Batala, Punjab. At Baring, we pursued a short course of background research in Indian Sociology and continued language training.

The choice of the Kangra District was as accidental as it was obvious. It was a nearby, largely unstudied area, with a culture containing elements both of the hills and the plains. The choice of the village of Sunhet was even more accidental, and considerably more practical and aesthetic than it was anthropological (since this study does not concern private lives, it was not considered necessary to use a pseudonym). The practical reason was my friendship with a non-resident landowner in the village and my father's brief acquaintance with the village "headman" which would give us points of reference for introducing ourselves. The aesthetic reasons were the location of Sunhet on the banks of the cool river Beas and in full view of the magnificent Dhaula Dhar ridge. Although all of these choices were made out of considerable ignorance and misgivings, the result was, fortunately, just about what we had hoped for.

Not knowing if it would be even possible to rent a house in the village, and through a feeling that it would be presumptuous, rude, and perhaps disastrous for personal relations if we tried to move immediately into the village (a feeling which I think now was basically sound), we set up camp about 400 yards from the nearest hamlets on a beautiful site overlooking the river. Although this would certainly appear suspicious, if not in fact impossible in many countries, this was a perfectly acceptable act in India where sportsmen and travelling officials customarily set up camp wherever they go.

On our arrival, we met the *lambardar* (revenue collector) (the ipso facto headman) and his brother and introduced ourselves through the connections mentioned previously. We then told him that we were American graduate students interested in the Kangra language, history, and customs, and were hoping to write a book about the area. Through the course of our year in the village, this explanation was repeated endlessly with many variations and embellishments, and was met with equally diversified modes of comprehension and acceptance. Those with a fair amount of education and experience understood fairly well our motives and purposes, while those with none of either never really questioned our presence. In between these extremes, though, there was a wide variety of responses. For example, sometimes when we would tell a newly met stranger and he would repeat it to a third person in our presence (which is the village way), it would come out as, "They've come here to fish",or "They've come just for a year's vacation here."— answers which were totally different from those we had given, but in many ways more comprehensible to them. The only real opposition we received with this explanation (which consisted of reserve and hesitancy rather than any hostility) sometimes was when we defined "customs" as meaning family social life, or that part of religion which was concerned with the so-called "non-Sanskritic" tradition—that is, shamanism, belief in ghosts and evil spirits, magic, etc.

We lived in our camp for a total of four months— which can only be considered camping in a British-Indian sense, since we had a bedroom tent, an office-dining room tent, and a cook tent where our cook and his small daughter lived. Our choice of cook (a necessity if we were to spend any of our time doing anything but cooking in village conditions) was very fortuitous, as we discovered the second day when a delegate from the village was sent to ascertain his caste and origin. He was a Rajput from a mountainous area 200 miles away, and was thus both of an appropriate caste for others to eat with us, and not a plains person (who are considered foreigners). In fact, as it turned out, he was by natural inclination the best anthropologist of the three of us, and we would often sit close by with pad and pencil writing frantically as he grilled people about caste, social life, religion, and especially local gossip.

The first couple of months (which in some senses was true of the whole year) was a painfully slow period of finding out the business of anthropology. We gradually met a few people, but were able to get embarrassingly little information of the kind we thought we should have. The Kangra Rajputs are reserved and difficult to approach (compared to the Punjabis below or the less sophisticated hill people above). This, coupled with our genuine embarrassment at "pushing" ourselves on them, or into their homes, left us somewhat isolated, and needless to say, frustrated. In addition, the strict observance of *purda* among the women meant that we had hardly even seen a female face, much less talked to one, and contributed to a mutual hesitancy to admitting us further into their lives. It was never a question of unfriendliness— on the contrary, it was an effort on both sides to maintain a proper and appropriate friendliness.

The natural break came when there were two weddings in the village, one of a boy and one of a girl, to which we were invited. As Kangra weddings are three to six-day affairs, and in the case of a boy involve a day's journey by foot to another village where the marriage party stays together,we had the opportunity to meet most of the Rajputs in the nearby hamlet, observe marriage ceremonies, and demonstrate our purposes in the village by collecting information publicly. This, plus our move not too long after into an empty house by the primary school (for the rent of $ 4 per month) resulted in a general acceptance and a fairly high degree of contact with the people.

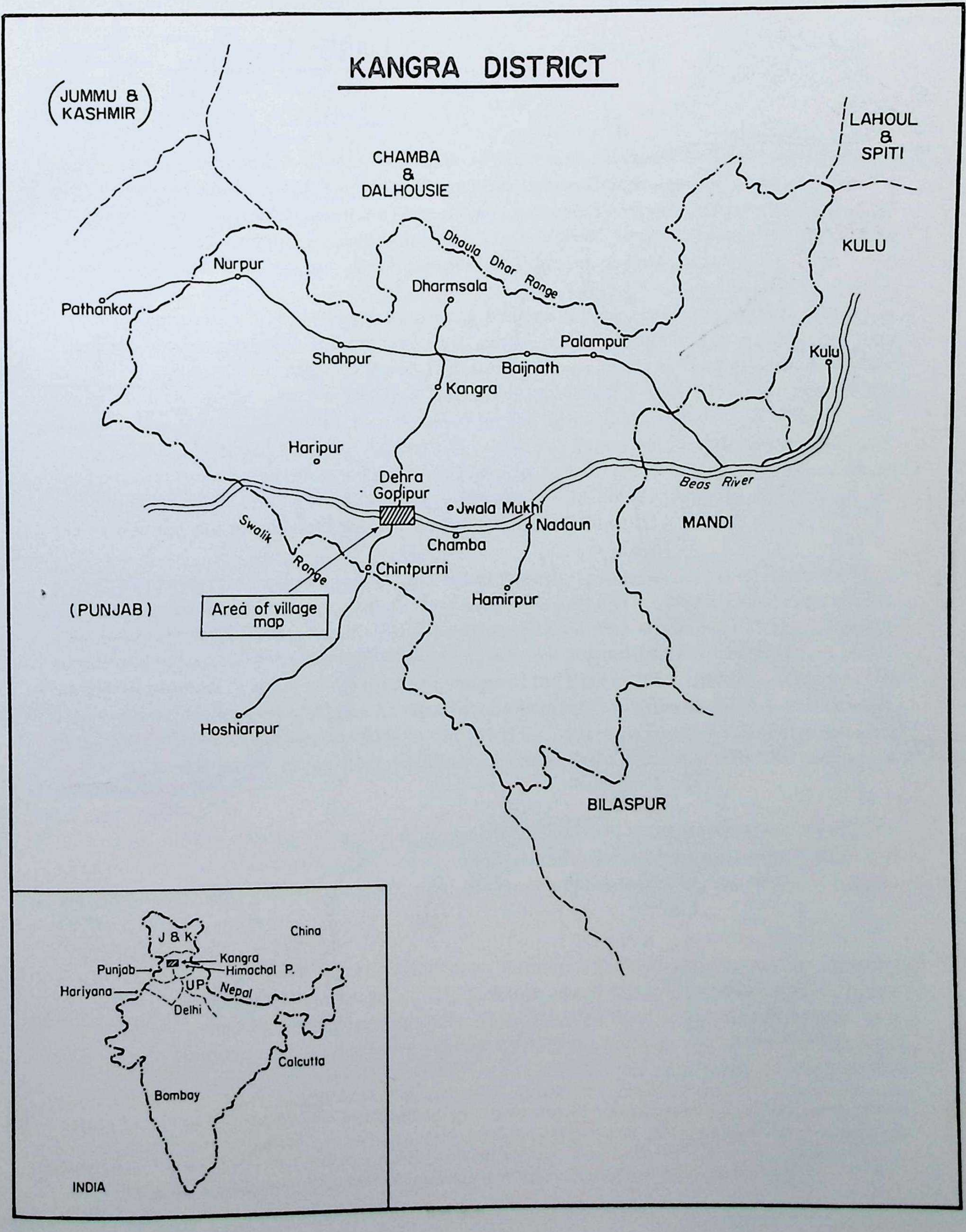
Although several organizational attempts were made at making a systematic census and questionnaire, research methods were more random than systematic. That is, data was collected when the opportunity arose through conversations, attendance at local events (marriages, funerals, religious meetings, fairs, festivals, school meetings, housebuilding, etc.), and trips to temples, relatives or anywhere else we were invited or could help provide transportation. Of necessity, we would often "guide" conversations, introduce topics, or seek out special individuals for certain kinds of information— and certain people became much better informants than others. Although this was one of the most fruitful means of collecting data, it was often the most personally disturbing for the same reason that we never completely carried through with our questionnaires: as we got to know people better, and real friendships developed, the business of anthropology would sometimess be in conflict with our friendship (although, of course, they sometimes went together extremely well). For in forcing a topic, or in re-examining for details and attitudes, there would occasionally be a violation of the other people's sense of propriety and the friendship established. The good anthropologist must objectify people and intrude himself into their lives in a half personal, half professional manner—and from this there was generated a moral tension which was often present with us, although never overwhelming.

I must say, though, that although I still feel this ambivalence toward the stance of anthropological field work, I now look back on the experience with gratitude to the Sunhet villagers who accepted me, and the many others who made it possible. The charge of academic imperialism is not easily rebutted, and it can only be hoped that mutual respect and openness will replace ethnocentricity whenever it is narrow and uncharitable.

NOTE ON LANGUAGES

As I already knew Punjabi and Hindi, it was not too difficult for me to pick up Pahari, the local dialect of the area. However, in addition to these three languages being spoken by various informants depending on their education, experience, and occupation, some of the older men spoke a fairly pure Urdu, and a few knew a reasonable English. This surprising variety in speech meant that important local words were taken down in different languages. Whenever possible, I tried to get the local Pahari word, but as sometimes the same word is used and other times I was unable to obtain an equivalent, this study often uses both Pahari and Punjabi or Hindi words interchangeably and without indication. Where I have felt the distinction or derivation is important, I have used the following abbreviations: Pahari Ph.; Punjabi Pn.; Hindi H.; Urdu U.; Sanskrit S.

I have used the customary Sanskrit transliteration with the normal Urdu variations in order to maintain a single spelling and pronunciation standard for all words, although at times the Hindusthani "*ch*" and "*sh*" are substituted for Sanskrit "*c*" and "*s*" to facilitate pronunciation. Diacritical markings have not been included.


KANGRA DISTRICT
(JUMMU & KASHMIR)
CHAMBA & DALHOUSIE
LAHOUL & SPITI
KULU
Dhaula Dhar Range
Nurpur
Pathankot
Dharmsala
Shahpur
Palampur
Baijnath
Kangra
Kulu
Haripur
Dehra Gopipur
Jwala Mukhi
Nadaun
Beas River
MANDI
Swalik Range
Chamba
Chintpurni
Hamirpur
(PUNJAB)
Area of village map
Hoshiarpur
BILASPUR
J & K
China
Kangra
Punjab
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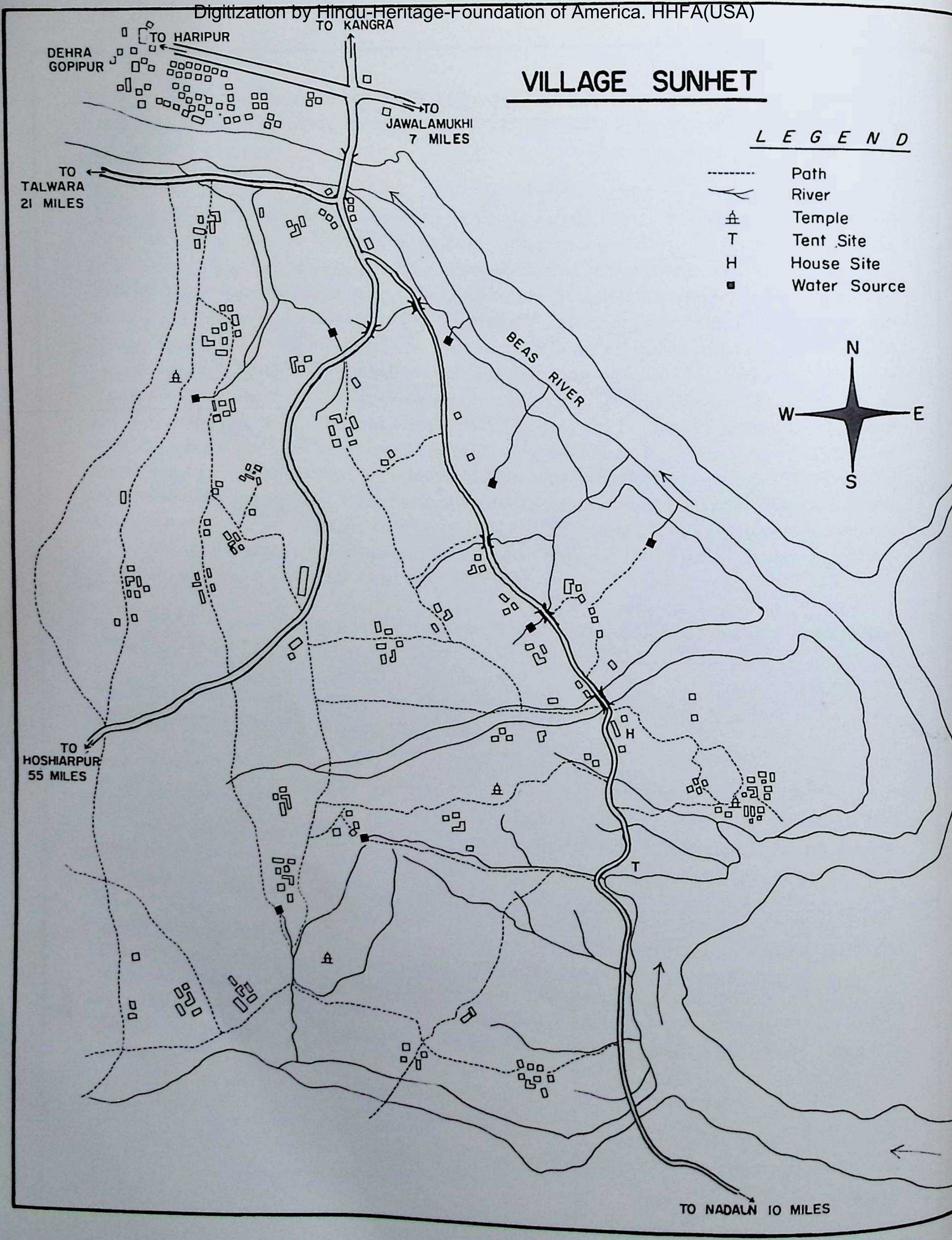
Hariyana
UP
Nepal
Delhi
Calcutta
Bombay
INDIA


VILLAGE SUNHET
LEGEND
Path
River
Temple
T Tent Site
H House Site
Water Source
N
W
E
S
TO KANGRA
TO HARIPUR
DEHRA GOPIPUR
TO JAWALAMUKHI 7 MILES
TO TALWARA 21 MILES
BEAS RIVER
TO HOSHIARPUR 55 MILES
H
T
TO NADAUN 10 MILES

B. SETTING

CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

There are two notions about the position of Kangra in North India which underlie much of this study: 1) that Kangra is a relatively homogeneous area that can be legitimately understood as a sub-cultural unit, and 2) that it is a "buffer" area between the Punjab plains and the isolated mountain societies, containing much of the distinctive elements of each and, as such, illustrating transitions from a "hill culture" to the ubiquitous Punjab "plains culture".

Geographically, this distinct intermediate position is very clear. The Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh (until the settlement of 1967 kangra was a district of the Punjab) is a hilly area with elevations of 2,000 to 5,000 feet surrounding the Beas River after it debouches from the Kulu gorge. On the western side, it starts abruptly with the beginning of the Swalik hills, and on the north, it is bounded by the spectacular wall of the Dhaula-Dhar ridge (13,000-17,000 ft.). On the eastern and southern sides, the boundaries are less distinct but are generally marked by higher mountains and different peoples. This geographical compromise is indicative of an agricultural one— Kangra has neither the irrigated fertility of the plains nor the precipitous and skimpy fields of the mountains.

It appears that these boundaries, in a cultural sense, have remained substantially the same for the last two thousand years. The ancient names for this area were *Jalandhara* and *Trigarta*. *Jalandhara* refers to the demon of that name whose fallen body, according to Kangra legends, constitutes the anatomical geography of the area; whereas *Trigarta* literally means "three rivers". and in all probability refers to the three tributaries of the Beas in the Kangra area. Kangra has always been ruled by a set of Rajput (S. *rajaputra*, "king's son") families established in their separate small principalities, and although it is likely that the ancient kingdom of *Jalandhara* extended to the plains, this set of endoganous families has always been located within the confines of *Trigarta*.

The striking characteristic of Kangra's history is that although internal warfare appears to have been the norm,* interference from external sources has been more nominal than real. Until the advent of the Moghuls in 1619, the history can perhaps best be understood as familial strife.

> The history of these Hill States is one of almost continuous war-fare. When a strong ruler rose to power, the larger States absorbed or made tributary their smaller neighbtours, but hese again asserted their independence as soon as a favourable opportunity arrived. These wars, however, did not lead to any great political changes. On the whole, the hill Chiefs were considerate of each other's

---

* The kind of warfare was obviously strikingly different from that we know now, as is clear from the eyewitness (through very ethonocentric) account by Mr. Forster, a traveller in 1783. He describes the army as "about 300 horses and 8000, footmen, armed with ma'chlocks, swords, spears and clubs, huddled together on two sides of a hill, in a deep state of confusion and filth." (Hutchinson & Vogel 1833,62)

> rights. Being all of the same race and faith, and also nearly related to one another by marriage and even closer family ties, they were content to make each other tributary, or to replace a deposed Chief by one of his own kinsmen. (Hutchinson & Vogel: 1933, 62).

This tendency to maintain traditional family rulers continued even after the area was attacked and controlled by the Moghuls in 1620 and the Sikhs in 1812; and was only broken down by the administrative powers of the British subsequent to 1846 and the Second Sikh War, though even the British tended to vest power in the traditional leaders. Thus, although Kangra was not as isolated from the events on the plains as the more remote hill states, the real rulers of the area were always Hindu Rajputs— for even though they paid tribute to the Moghuls and Sikhs, and even briefly the Shah dynasty of Nepal, the latter two never set up court or established their own values and cultural styles within Kangra.

LANGUAGE

Linguistically, Kangra fits into the continuum of Indo-Aryan dialects in Northern India. Locally it is called *Pahari* ("of the hills", a term also applied to the people), and no category is used to distinguish it from the scores of other *Paharis* which range from minor variations 10 miles away to the entirely different languages found 200 miles away near Nepal. Significantly, the Kangra people thought of it, as well as themselves, as included in the "mountain family". In contrast, Bailey and Grierson classify the local dialect as *Kangri*, a member of the Dogra dialects of Punjabi (Grierson: 1917, IX, iv). But as a Punjabi dialect with many Hindi elements, it nevertheless has a distinct grammar and much of its vocabulary is held in common with the more remote mountain dialects. In fact, the transition between linguistic areas is so gradual that it is unclear when travelling north when it becomes *Chambeali*, when travelling east, *Mandeali,* etc., although each of these languages is classified as a hill dialect by Grierson and Wilson (Wilson: 1962 reprint). As the Kangra villagers say, "Every twenty miles the language changes, and after fifty it is no longer intelligible."

Due to this linguistic diversity, various second languages have been used for administrative purposes and communication with neighboring peoples, including: Urdu, Punjabi, English, and most recently Sankritized Hindi. A few of the educated or travelled people have fairly good command of one or more of these languages, whereas for most, it is usually a unique and interesting melange. If the recent switch to Hindi from Urdu as the medium of instruction in school is not reversed by the communal demands for the artificial *Himachali* language, the use of Hindi should increase significantly.

PEOPLE

The Kangra people, although distinct in language, dress, and customs, do not belong to a tride or recognized ethnic group. They are Hindus (excluding the small groups of Sikhs, Moslems, and Tibetan refugees) with basically the same social structure as found elsewhere in North India.

CASTE

The dominant caste is Rajput, which is subdivided into hier archical exogamous subcastes which are divided into the high subcastes (*main* Rajputs: the ruling families mentioned previously) and the low. These two categories are theoretically endogenous units which function hypergamously (i. e. in which the daughter is given upwards in marriage) but the frequent violations (or departures from the ideal) are not considered serious social infringements. The subcaste is distinct from the *gotra* (or got) which cuts across caste boundaries, and functions solely and somewhat vaguely as an ideal exogamous unit (most people do not even know their wife's *gotra*). Both the subcaste and the *gotra* are inherited through the father, as the society is both patrilineal and virilocal. However, as will be shown later, there is what is known as a "submerged descent line" called by Turner (1969) a "spiritual relationship" through the maternal side as well

The Rajputs, clearly associated with the ideal traditional *ksatriya varna*, or, warrior caste, are still, as they were classified by the British, a "martial caste". Generally, at least one member of a family serves in the military, especially the Dogra Regmiments which were named after the Kangra and Jammu Rajputs. The Rajputs are also the largest group of landowners, and although they traditionally did not till their land themselves, they have during the last 50 years been forced to drop that caste regulation by the changing social and economic conditions. The typical Rajput combines both of these occupations by serving in the military until he is eligible for pension, and then retiring to his village and farming his land.

The Rajputs have hereditary relationships with both Brahmans and some lower castes. The Brahmans, also divided into subcastes, are considered ritually superior, and though endogamous, usually do not hesitate to interdine with the *main* Rajputs. The traditional priestly occupation (which is discussed in the next chapter) is maintained by some families who have special relationships to other caste families, but it is not particularly lucrative. The remainder are generally agriculturalists or shopkeepers, and as a group the Brahmans own a significant amount of the land. They are not usually vegetarians, and by the plains' standards are usually lax in maintaining their unique ritual status."

The only other landowning caste is the Girths, a caste occupying an intermediate position between the high and low, and having a large population in Kangra, which is almost entirely agricultural.

There are basically the same low castes in Kangra as elsewhere in Northern India, i. e. *mocchi* (cobler), *lohar* (blacksmith)' *sud* (shopkeeper), Harijans (scheduled castes, and renamed outcastes), etc. The two most important distinctly regional castes are the Julas (weavers), and the Dumnas (bamboo workers). As among the high castes, the traditional occupations from which their names are derived are followed by less than half of the population. The rest become tenants for the landowners or find other jobs within the area, i. e. mule driver, road worker, etc., or with education, clerk, electrician, postal worker, etc.

Intercaste ties, such as the *jajmani* or *birton* system of services exchanged for *anaj* (harvest crops), still exist but are changing rapidly with the increasing change to a moneyed economy. However, most Rajput families still have their family barber, cobler, tenants, tailor, basket maker, etc., even though some of these services are now paid for in money.

Social and ritual distance between castes have somwhat lessened in recent years, but primarily in a quantitative sense. Structurally, the system has not changed significantly. There is no sanctioned interdining or inter-marriage between castes which did not occur before, except in the ambiguous situations of restaurants in towns and cities. Certain temples and wells, despite government regulations to the contrary, still bar entrance to the lower castes, and, whereas Rajput and Brahman courtyards are now open to Harijans, their houses are still inviolate. The main forces working against the caste system are the more or less equal opportunities offered by the government in education and civil service employment, and increased travel and education. However, it is not likely that the central value of caste endogamy will change for many years.

In the Kangra district, the settlement pattern is also such that it reinforces caste identify. Houses are grouped in hamlets containing families of the same caste who are usually related. In addition, there are some isolated households, usually built by a family which has moved from another village, or one which has broken away from its joint family. The term village, therefore, is somewhat of a misnomer. In Kangra, a village is technically a *mauza* which for revenue, postal and judicial purposes is composed of a number of hamlets usually containing from three to fifteen houses (*bhers* or *tikas*) and scattered individual houses and often covering more than ten square miles. The *bher* is actually a subdivision of the area of the *mauza*, and may thus conatain more than one hamlet and caste. The *bher* is, then, the most important territorial unit, and intercaste relations are coincident with inter-*bher* ties, which may or may not extend outside the *mauza*.

Of considerably more importance to the Kangra villager's identity than the *mauza*, is the *bradri*, the relations. Due to marriage patterns which extend in all directions up to fifty miles (although generally remain between four and fifteen), the network of the *bradri* will often cover a good deal of the whole district. Thus inter-*bher* ties are formed between people of the same caste (though of different subcaste) throughout the area, and due to the familial nature of the hamlets, practically every member of these related hamlets become at least classificatory relations.

Intra-*bradri* relationships correspond, broadly, to the kinship system existing elsewhere in Northern India. As it is not my intention here to examine that system in its complexity and with Kangra variations, I will merely mention a few key notions.

The sibling relationship is without doubt the freest and most intimate kinship relationship. This is especially true for ego's immediate brothers and sisters, but also extends to cousins and classificatory sibling (the only linguistic difference being one addition of *sakka*, "hard" or "true" before the terms for brother and sister, *bhai* or *pra* and *bahan* or *phan* respectively). The closeness of this relationship carries over after a sister's marriage, and the very special maternal uncle (*mama*) relationship is established with her children, to such an extent that the *mama* is responsible for almost half of the wedding expenses of his nephew (*patija*) as well as a particular emotional and spiritual relationship. On the male sibling side, the ideal of this brother relationship is the rationalization for the joint family system— a system which in reality exists only among some of the families, which, in all probability, has always been the case.

In contrast, reserve and respect characterize the wife-husband and son-father relationships. For example, the wife must never call her husband by name, and can never eat until after her husband is finished. This same relationship must occur between the wife and any older males in the household, before whom she must hide her face— and ceases to apply only to husband's younger brothers with whom there is a joking relationship (in some area, sexual).

The importance of the *bradri* is in evidence primarily at marriages and funerals. At these times of kinship as well as religious importance, the *bradri* gathers to renew ties and play out the specific roles and duties required by the rituals and the kinship system. The importance of these family bonds for understanding their religious life probably cannot be overestimated.

ECONOMY AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Although agriculture is the principal occupation, it provides little or no cash to either the landowners or tenants. Due to the hilly and unirrigated nature of the land and the large population, most villages are not even self sufficient in food. This, plus the difficulties of transportation (the land is too steep for ox-carts) has mitigated against a market economy.

However, by all-India standards, Kangra is certainly not a poor area, a fact that is probably due, in large part, to the military tradition which provides salaried people in most Rajput families. In addition, the many jobs resulting from greater education in various branches of government service, are also a source of continuing income to villages whose sons are in its employ.

Over the last twenty years, the number of schools has increased drastically, and it is now within every family's reach to give their children education through high school. Kangra residents are clearly impressed with the value of education (for males, at any rate) and will, if possible, send their sons to one of the two district colleges. Until recently, these values were reinforced by the functional relationship between degree and salary, a situation that has rapidly deteriorated with the increasing ratio of graduates to employment opportunities. But, on the lower levels, this emphasis on education is effectively eliminating illiteracy among the young.

In addition to schools and steady construction of more bussable roads, the most widespread modern innovation to the economy is the rapid electrification of the area. Aside from the possible effect of lowering the birth rate, this should provide a means of building and running tube wells and irrigating the land. This, in turn, would allow for the widespread use of the new "Mexican" wheat seeds, which has revolutionized the economy of the neighboring Punjab by doubling and tripling yield. It is quite conceivable that the benefits brought by the water and seed for the winter wheat crop could also have similar affects on the monsoon (summer) corn, the other principal crop of the area. It is doubtful, however, that agricultural progress could ever be as striking as it has been in the Punjab, for the use of tractors is generally prohibited by the small precipitous fields.

In the recent adjustment of political boundaries during Punjabi Suba and the creation of Hariyana State in late 1967, Kangra district was shifted from the wealthy Punjab to the entirely mountainous Himachal Pradesh State (H. P.) The effect of this move on Kangra was to change its status from "a backward area" in the Punjab, to "a developed area " in H. P. Thus, government funds that were originally diverted *to* Kangra to raise its level of development are now diverted *from* Kangra to the less developed and more primitive area in the Himalayan interior. Economically, this has meant a slowdown of development funds and projects, but aside from some disgruntled citizens has not too drastically changed the economic outlook.

Although one consequence of the new political boundaries has been to reduce the number of plains officials in Kangra, regular contact is maintained with the Punjab through military personnel, economic dependency and the large number of pilgrims who visit Kangra temples and festivals each year. On the other hand, even though there is a closer cultural relationship with the various other mountain peoples, contact is limited to occasional journeys and the winter migrations of the Gaddi shepherd tribe from Chamba into Kangra. This is, however, no less than it used to be, and it still seems appropriate to view Kangra as a "buffer area"— a hill culture with considerable contact with the plains.

C. Methodology

This study proposed to understand some of the structures of Indian Hinduism as exhibited in the Sunhet village and environs of the Kangra District, and wherever possible, how the modes of change relate to these structures. In formulating my intention in this way I have relied on three basic methodological points of departure, or assumptions, which are the conceptual cornerstones for this study: 1) A cultural area's religion can be understood as meaningfully integrated cultural *system* of symbols, rituals, myths, beliefs, scriptures, etc. which although intimately connected with social and psychological structures and processes can, in significant ways, be understood apart from these. (2) The structural anthropological approach as outlined by Levi-Strauss and utilized to some degree by Leach, Ames, Yalman, etc. is a valuable method of analysis for revealing significant structural aspects of this system, not only for comparative "cognitive" purposes, but also in helping us to understand the "existential" value and meaning of the religious phenomena analyzed. (3) An understanding of synchronic structures can be meaningfully related to diachronic processes of change within and without the religious "system".

An elaboration of these three points will, I hope, clarify the methodological procedures used in this study, as well as come to grips with some of the methodological problems involved in the study of religion in general, and Hinduism in particular.

"Religion as a Cultural System" (Geertz: 1957)

The heuristic assumption that "the religious categories of primitive societies form a coherent and internally consistent set of beliefs and symbols (like language) which, given the premises, follow logically" (Yalman: 1964, 115) is not quite as quantitative or narrowminded as it may sound. It is a working assumption that merely points out that religious symbols, acts, etc. must be understood in terms of other religious symbols and acts. That is, religious phenomena are self-referential— the meaning of an individual item is found only by examining its position within the whole range of religious activity and thought. Religion can be considered a "coherent and internally consistent" system. This is not to say that it does not contain contradictions or conflicts, or constantly refer to systems of behavior and thought which are clearly non-religious; but in the sense that its meaning is interrelated and understandable through certain premises or structures which are discoverable within it.

The analogy with language is here, as it is elsewhere in structural anthropology, apt. Religion is in some senses like language, and its "lexical items" cannot be truly understood until its "language" is mastered— for the "lexical items" have "semantic structures" through which "grammers" can eventually be posited. Meaning, therefore, is contextual and must be understood within the religious system (language) of the culture.

> The learning of a religious language for the anthropologist is similar to the learning of any other language: the implications of symbols and the contexts in which their use is appropriate must be understood. (Yalman: 1964, 115)

From this point of view, the primary characteristics of the religious system which can be revealed are its meaning structures rather than, say, its social and psychological functions and stimuli. Thus, this approach also provides a means of investigating more universal modes of meaning, its basic concern is with a religion in its cultural setting; in fact, religion as a cultural system.

Along the same lines of Levi-Strauss' understanding of culture as rules governing communication (1963, 289), Geertz considers culture as:

> An historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, Perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life. (1964, 3)

Following this line of reasoning, culture can be said to contain "a unity of style, of logical implication, of meaning and value," that is as characterized by "logico-meaningful integration." (Geertz 1957, 549). Leaving aside for the moment the relationship between "culture" and "religion", it can be seen that this understanding of culture coincides with that aspect of religion which concerns us here— so that in the following discussion,what is appropriate to the cultural system, is also relevant to the religious system.

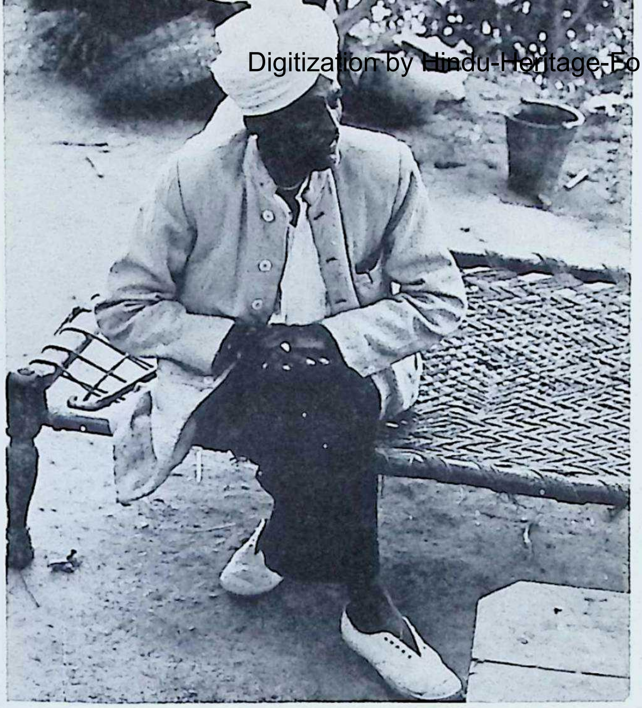
In this formulation, the cultural system is analytically distinct from social structure and individual psychology, and any meaningful understanding of it must proceed from an analysis of its meaning within its own terms. For although the cultural system and social system are but "different abstractions from the same phenomena", the conception of culture as "the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action" and of social structure as "the form that action takes" (Greetz: 1957, 549), allows each to be a legitimate field of inquiry in itself, demanding their own categories and modes of comprehension. Otherwise (as so often happens) a single frame of reference is made all-pervasive, and one kind of meaning is reduced to another. This is clearly the kind of reductionism I wish to avoid through the preceding formulation of culture (and religion), and which is so clearly pointed out in the passage Geertz quotes from Parsons, *The Social System,* which sets out the categorical distinctions mentioned above.

> Thus conceived, a social system is only one of three aspects of the structuring of a completely concrete system of social action. The other two are the personality systems of the individual actors and the cultural system which is built into their action. Each of the three must be considered to be an independent focus of the organization of the elements of the action system in the sense that no one of them is theoretically reducible to terms of one or a combination of the other two. Each is indispensable to the other two in the sense that without personalities and culture there would be no social system and so on around the roster of logical possibilities. But this interdependence and interpenetration is a very different matter from reducibility, which would mean that the important properties and processes of one class of system could be theoretically *derived* from our theoretical knowledge of one or both of the other two. The action frame of reference is common to all three and this fact makes certain "transformations" between them possible. But on the level of theory here attempted they do not constitute a single system, however, this might turn out to be on some other theoretical level. (1957, 549).

Thus, for this study, I have sought to understand religious life primarily through the meaning structures exhibited in the cultural religious system itself; and although my hesitancy to relate this understanding at every point to the social and personality structures stems in large part from lack of data, it has been bolstered by methodological doubts as to the correct method of proceeding. In this I disagree with Melford Spiro, "Religion, then is to be explained in terms of society and personality" (1966, 122), and agree with Geertz:

> The anthropological study of religion is therefore a two-stage operation: first, an analysis of the system of meanings embodied in the symbols which make up the religion proper, and, second, the relating of these systems to social-structural and psychological processes. . . . .Only when we have a theoretical analysis of symbolic action comparable in sophistication to that we now havefor social and psychological action, will we be able to cope effectively with those aspects of social and psychological life in which religion (or art, or science, or ideology) plays a determinant role. (1966, 42).

However, this methodological concern with religion as a symbolic cultural system gives it a rarified and abstract emphasis which any anthropologist returning from the field would be the first to disclaim. In fact, the attempt to understand the meaning of religious symblos is, in part, of value precisely because of the emotional and *real* meanings they have for participants. Victor Turner is very clear on this point in his analysis of the *Isoma* ceremony among the Ndembu:



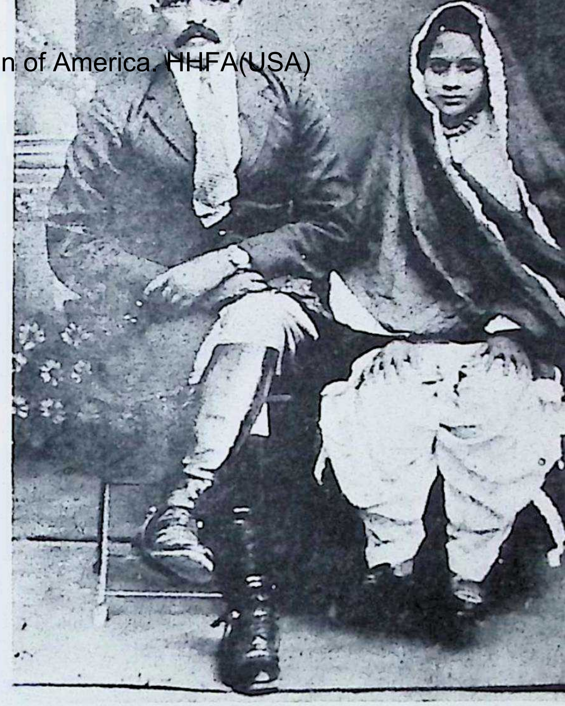
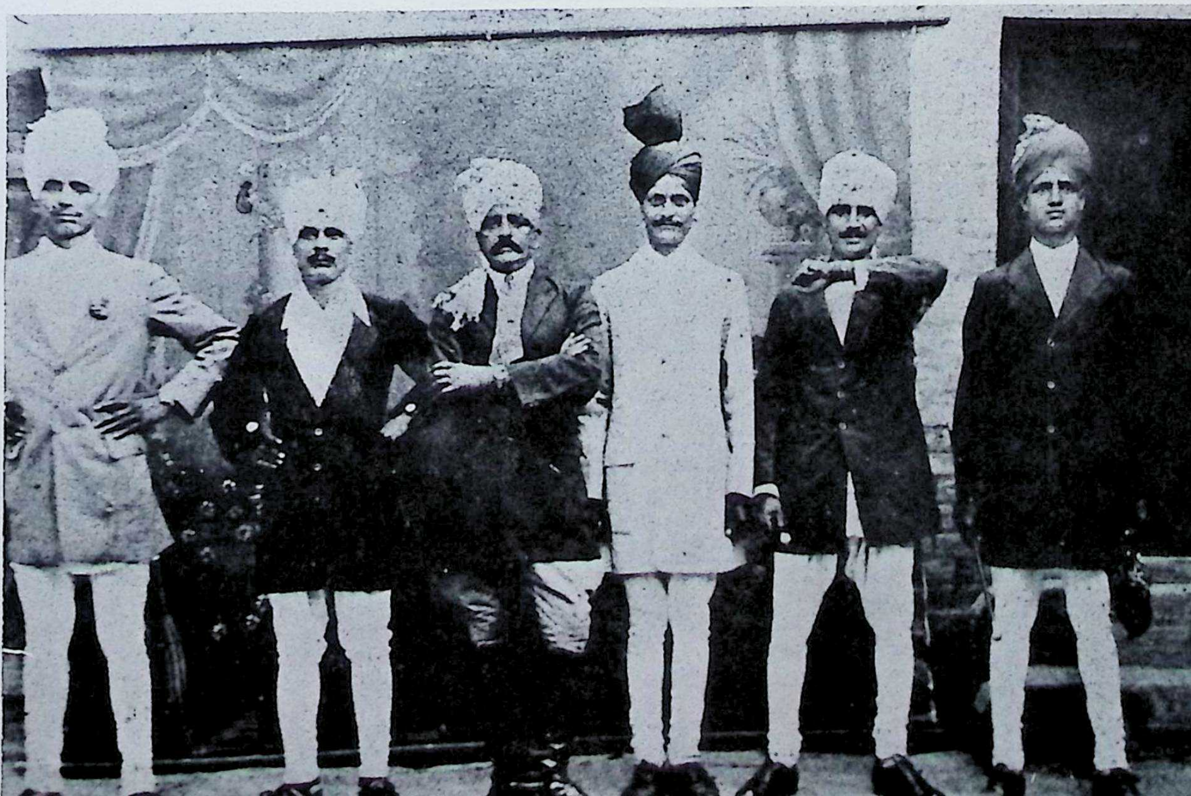
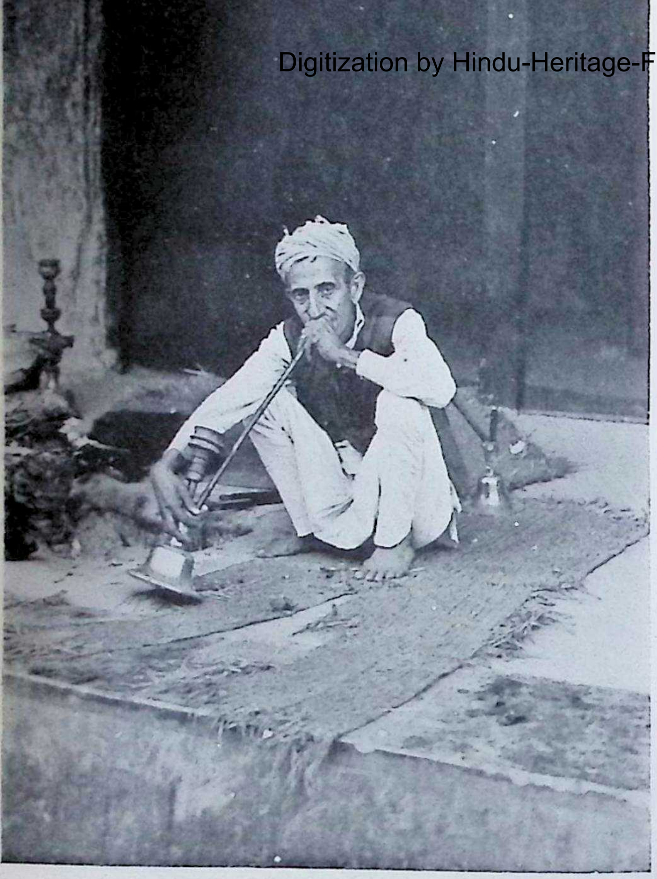


Plate 1. Kangra Rajput in Sunhet.

Plates 2. (top right) and 3 (below). 30 years old photographs of Kangra Rajputs kept by Sunhet families.





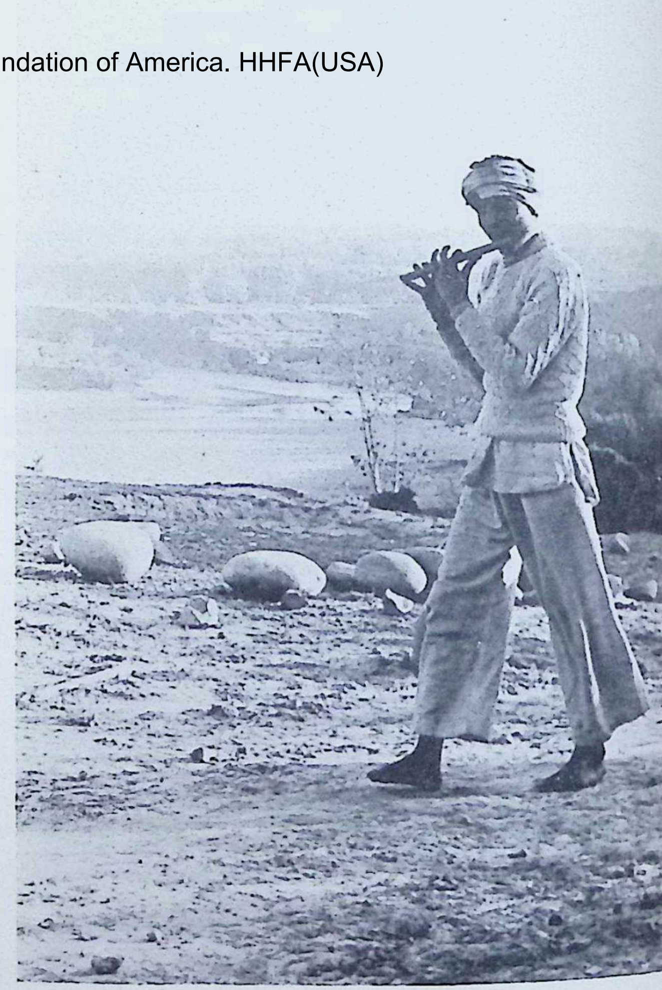


Plate 4. Brahman temple priest (Pujari) at Chinaur Temple.

Plate 5. Jula (weaver-caste) boy playing flute with Beas River in Background.

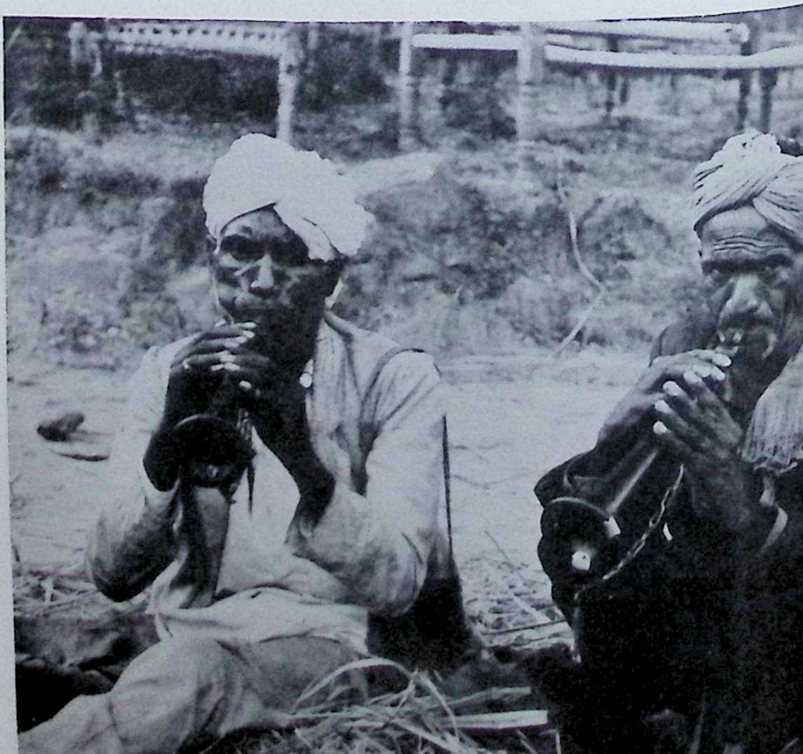


Plate 6. Local musicians of the Jula caste playing traditional shanai.

> The symbols and their relations as found in the *Isoma* are not only a set of cognitive classifications for ordering the Ndembu universe. They are also, and perhaps as importantly, a set of evocative devices for rousing, channeling, and domesticating powerful emotions such as hate, fear, affection, and grief. They are also informed with purposeness and have a "conative" aspect. In brief, the whole person, not just the Ndembu "mind" is existentially involved in the life or death issues with which *Isoma* is concerned. (1967, 42).

Geertz also shows this clearly in his definition of religion as

> a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conception with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (1966, 4).

Although Geertz goes so far as to say that the set of religious symbols engenders and is engendered by a unique "religious perspective" which is "a particular way of looking at life" radically different from the common-sensical one, it is sufficient here to note that the meaning constellations they carry are often among the most powerful in a culture— perhaps, as many anthropologists would argue, because it is precisely with the most deep-seated conflicts in life and society that religion deals.

The notion of religion as a system of meaning also paves the way toward eliminating the conceptual confusion clinging to the division of religion into "popular" (low) and "elite" (high); specifically in the Indian context, the division between "Little Tradition" and "Great Tradition" first proposed by Redfield and with very little subsquent resistance. The anthropology of religion, centered as it is on all meaning relevant to living individuals within a culture, must by definition ignore no evidence or aspect of religion. How, then, is the literary-philosophical tradition reconciled with the local popular "supernatural" tradition? Or, as Eliade puts it, "Which is the true meaning of Durga and Siva— what is deciphered by the initiates, or what is taken up by the mass of the faithuful?" (i. e. active and passive life forces. or phallus and vagina?). Eliade's answer (and the traditional Hindu would agree with him) is :

> I am trying to show that both are equally valuable; that the meaning given by the masses stands for as authentic a modality of the sacred manifested in Durga or Siva as the interpretation of the initiates. And I can show that the two hierophanies fit together—and the modalities of the sacred which they reveal are in no sense contradictory. but are complementary and parts of a whole. (Eliade: 1958 7).

However much I agree with the intent of Eliade's answer, that is, the inherent meaning relation between all religious phenomena in their varying interpretations; I must disagree with the kind of reconciliation he finds. For Eliade, like the traditional Hindu, starts with the sacred and then examines its different manifestations ("the religious historian.. must first of all understand and explain the modality of the sacred that the hierophany discloses" 1958, 5); that is, the approach is *theological*, not *anthropological*. According to the premises outlined above the key to the anthropological approach is to examine the various meanings in relation to each other, with the assumption that they are a part of a meaningfully integrated system. But a "meaningfully integrated system" does not mean a system without contradictions. On the contrary, meaning is usually built on meaningful contradictions and oppositions— far from explaining the contradictions away, the role of the anthropologist of religion is to find their most fundamental forms, the basic meaning structures and contradictions. Following this method, it often happens (as I will in fact argue in this study) that these contradictions and disparities evinced by different interpretations are transformational homologies of each other, and that corresponding meanings can be found on different "levels" of interpretation. Thus, any differences and contradictions between what is characterized as the "Little" and "Great" traditions become the major sources for understanding both as meaningfully related and part of the same constantly changing yet structurally whole system.

THE STRUCTURAL APPROACH

As outlined by Levi-Strauss, the structural approach is a redirecting of the methods of structural linguistics to the data of anthropology. His understanding of those linguistic methods and directions are thus identical to the ones he applied to anthropology:

> First, structural linguistics shifts from the study of conscious linguistic phenomena to study of their *unconscious* infrastructure; second, it does not treat *terms* as independent entities, taking instead as its basis of analysis of the *relations* between terms; third, it introduces the concept of *system*—"Modern phonemics does not merely proclaim that phonemes are always part of a system; it *shows* concrete phonemic systems and elucidates their structure" (Troubetzkoy)—; finally, structural linguistics aims at discovering *general laws*, either by induction "or... by logical deduction, which would give them an absolute character." (Levi-Strauss : 1963, 31).

The assumption upon which this methodological adoption is based is that the "stuff" of culture is enough like the "stuff" of language to allow the use of the same methods.

> The material out of which language is built is of the same type as the material out of which the whole culture is built: logical relations,, oppositions, correlations, and the like. (Levi-Strauss: 1963, 67)

Which is just another way of saying (not unreasonably) that the mental and psychical operations through which language is creatd and comprehended are at least in part the same *kind* of operaitons active in relation to culture.

The radically important and far reaching innovation in this approach has been, following the lead of linguistics, to completely change the manner in which the terms of cultural meaning are to be understood.

> The error of traditional anthropology, like that of traditional linguistics, was to consider the terms, and not the relations between the terms. (Levi-Strauss: 1963, 45)

More specifically the traditional anthropologist's error (and we can include "phenomenologists of religion" such as Mircea Eliade Joseph Campbell, van der Leeuw, Zimmer, Gaster, etc. in this) was to understand the terms as having intrinsic significance or meaning posited on a single universal reference.

For example, Eliade states that although a particular sacred tree only has meaning in its particular societies, it "is venerated because it embodies the sacred significance of the universe in constant renewal of life; it is venerated, in fact, because it embodies, is part of, or symbolizes the universe as represented by all the Cosmic Trees in all mythologies." (Eliade: 1958, 3) Examples could be multiplied ad infinitum— and many of them would be correct insofar as they stem from the scholar's understanding of the "religious language" of the culture, but they have provided an erroneous, if oft-used, base for generalizations and comparisons. This is evident even in Jung's psychological work:

> Let us consider, for instance, Jung's ideas that a given mythological pattern —the so-called archetype—possesses a certain maning. This is comparable to the long-supported error that a sound may possess a certain affinity with a meaning...... the Saussurean principle of the arbitrary character of linguistic sings was a prerequisite for the accession of linguistics to the scientific level. (Levi-Strauss: 1963, 204)

By examining the relations between terms rather than assuming universal meaning associations, structural anthropology allows for various different cultural contents, and yet makes room for comparative analysis in terms of the relationships between terms.

> The terms (of a system) never have any intrinsic significance. Their meaning is one of "position" — a function of the history and cultural context on the one hand and of the structural system in which they are called upon to appear on the other. (Levi-Strauss: 1962, 55)

> ... analogous logical structures can be construed by means of different lexical resources. It is not the elements themselves but only the relations between them which are constant. (Levi-Strauss: 1962, 53)

Having posited the systematic and "logical" nature of these relations, it becomes clear that they can be most often understood as oppositions or correlations, and the structuralist's task is thus to make structural models through recognizing the best "level of reality" for understanding the phenomenon.

The fact that comparable meaning can only be found on the level of relations does not belie the tendencies for cultures to use similar contents in their terms. This is especially true for religious phenomena, and partially accounts for the considerable success achieved so far by scholars who have understood rituals, myths, etc. through terms that they considered to have intrinsic significance. If we stop to consider why this is true, we recognize this question as being essentially a psychological one, and can understand, without resorting to Jungian archetypes, why Levi-Strauss considers his anthropology to be psychology :

> ... (the anthropologist's) goal is to grasp, beyond the conscious and always shifting images which men hold, the complete range of unconscious possibilities. (1963: 23)

The necessity to understand symbols (and other kinds of terms such as ritual items and the constituent units of myth) in their contextual meaning, has been further elaborated by Turner from his work with ritual symbols.

> ... many ritual symbols are *multivocal* or *polysemous,* i. e. they stand for many objects, activities and relationships—there is not a one-to-one relationship between symbol and referent but a one-to-many relationship. Each major symbol has a "fan" or "spectrum" of referents (denotata and connotata), which tend to be interlinked by what is usually a simple mode of association, its very simplicity enabling it to interconnect a wide variety of referents. (Turner: 1962, 254)

Thus, to understand a symbol, it bocomes necessary to find its positional meaning in every context in which it is used— through the relations it forms with other symbols.

Insofar as this meaning may, or may not coincide with the exegetical meanings given by informants, it is necessary to examine both meanings, and correlate the results. Depending on the culture, and the specific content that is being dealt with the "structural meaning" will be more or less visible (or conscious). This in no way limits the meaningfulness of the structure, rather difference (or similarity) between the conscious exegetical meaning and structural meaning is an important relationship which helps to determine the structural meaning.

> A structural model may be conscious or unconscious without this differenc affecting its nature. It can only be said that when the structure of a certain type of phenomena does not lie at a great depth, it is more likely that some kind of model, standing as a screen to hide it, will exist in the collective consciousness. For conscious models, which are usually known as "norms", are by definition very poor ones, since they are not intended to explain the phenomena but to perpetuate them. (Levi-Strauss: 1963, 273)

This is the claim upon which the structural approach stakes its value. For, essentially, what it is saying is that there are systematic ways of understanding meaning systems, which, even if not present consciously, are nevertheless one form of the "real" meaning— that is, in a form which allows our understanding to be truer to the culture under consideration and the people in it. This does in fact seem to be the case, if we remember that "when we describe structure... we are, as it were, in the realm of grammar and syntax, not of the spoken word." (Fortes 1949: 56, in Levi-Strauss: 1963, 297). But this is, ultimately, an assumptive stance, a psychological premise, whose validity will only be established through different applications in different cultures. However, inasmuch as I have used the structural approach in this study, it has been in the reasoned conclusion that this is the case; and I am confident that the structures are in some sense actually present much in the way Leach describes their presence in mythical recitations:

> Whenever a corpus of mythology is recited in its religious setting such structural patterns are "felt" to be present, and convey meaning much as poetry conveys meaning. Even though the ordinary listener is not fully conscious of what has been communicated, the "message" is there in a quite objective sense. (Leach: 1962, 12)

STRUCTURE AND CHANGE

M. N. Srinivas (1966) has isolated and developed the concept of "sanskritization" to describe social change in modern India. This process, in brief, consists in the adoption of the beliefs and practices of the "dominant" caste by the lower castes; or, as an extension of the same idea, the imitation of other Hindu's manners and customs which appear to the imitators more orthodox or Sanskritic. However, as Srinivas points out, this can be in the direction of either the "great" or "little" tradition depending on the locally dominant model— rendering both those distinctions meaningless. He considers this process as simultaneous, but in an opposite direction, to "Westernization", a type of change which, in turn, is concommitant to, but distinct from "secularization".

In structural terms, it is methodologically clear from our previous discussion, in a way I will attempt to demonstrate in part in this study, that sanskritization does not constitute a structural change, but a semantic one; that is, "replacive" rather than "reformative".:

> .... "sanskritization" does not consist in the impsition of a different system upon an old one, but in the acceptance of a more distinguished or prestigious way of saying the same things. (Dumont: 1959, 45)

In contrast, Westernization implies the adoption of non-Indian values into Indian cultural settings which, of necessity requires various structural adjustments and changes. Secularization is basically the same; for although it describes a disintegration rather than importation, the source for the disinegration is the acceptance of new values however confused and conflicting.

However, the obvious symptoms of Westernization and secularization sometimes serve to distinguise changes which, analogously to those described by sanskritization, are happening within the structural format of Indian culture. Indeed, the Indian Hindu "religious system" has been undergoing changes of this type for thousands of years, even when the impetus of change has been alien beliefs and practices; a process which has accelerated in recent years. The reason for this striking tendency in Hinduism, is, I believe, twofold: a) the unique structural organization of Indian Hinduism which has allowed it to adopt most of the foreign elements it has come into contact with without necessitating basic structural changes, and (b) the dialectical relationship between structure and change which can allow diachronic processes to take place without necessarily altering the nature of synchronic structures.

As the specific structures of Hinduism is the subject of the study, I will concern myself here with methodological assumption contained in the second reason.

The structures of a religious system are its meaning, its patterns of intelligibility. The fact that these meanings are understood in terms of a system is not, as was mentioned earlier, to say that it forms a closed harmonious whole. Rather, the construct of "system" is used to indicate that each term within it must be understood relationally with the other terms. Similar structures within the system are not only found on one "level of reality" but on many. This means that the "system" can be changing in terms of its content, that it can accept new symbols and meanings as long as they *mean* in ways which can be understood as bringing the same structures into a new focus. Stated in the active, rather than the artificial passive, this means that as long as new terms are intelligible in already extant modes of understanding (that is, as long as the relations they form in the system are the same kind), then changes in content can occur within continuous cultural structures.

Different kinds of changes come in different ways. Now-a-days, it appears that the most devastating is Westernization and concommitant secularization — a gradual homogenization of the world's cultures into a confused, if frighteningly similar, mixture. As a counterpoint to that, however, certain kinds of *adaptive* changes are also occurring such as I have described above and hope to point up within the religious system of the Kangra Rajputs. I suspect that, given the normal course of history, change has a tendency to occur in this latter way, and it is only when we have truly structurally.disruptive forces, such as is probably occurring now, that the former kind of disintegration occurs. Perhaps by understanding better the nature of these changes, and the structures within or without which they occur, we will be in a better position to understand and preserve the integrity of different cultures.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Kangra religion, although exhibiting certain local characteristics which territorily relate it to surrounding areas, has as much a right to the title Hinduism as any other area in the Indian sub-continent whose people call themselves Hindus. For "Hinduism" is a Western rubric attached to a large variety of social and religious phenomena in evidence among Indian Hindus and to a lesser degree, Indians of any sort: Sikhs, Jains, Moslems, Christians, etc. Because of these broader cultural meanings, any definition is either hopelessly broad or narrow. In North Indian languages, the term that comes the closest to meaning religion is *dharam* (S= *dharma*)— a term which refers to both social and ceremonial observances as well as the scriptural traditions based on the Vedas; that is, "duty" and "prescriptions" as well as "religion." However ubiquitous many of its characteristics, there is something which makes the Hindu *dharam* a single *dharam*, and not a number of religions related by a wider culture. In part, this common *dharam* is what might be termed "sociological" or behavioral; but, it is my contention, that it is also shared meaning structures— shared ways of understanding and dealing with the world. In this sense, these structures are to be found in Kangra as well as any other place.

On the conceptual (i. e. ideational, not structural) level, this common Hindu background, or welthanschaung, is based on the key notions of *karma, samsara* and *moksa*. *Samsara* (H= *sansar*, "the world") is the cyclical course of earthly life from birth to death to rebirth, the continually reoccuring human situation through transmigration. *Karma* (S= "action", "deed") is the law of cause and effect which operates on individuals in *samsara*. Previous actions determine the *Karma* of an in dividual at his birth and thus places him in a certain appropriate situation (i. e. in relation to caste, wealth, physical body, etc.). Once in the situation the person is free within the limitations of his circumstances to do good or bad deeds, which at his death are considered in light of his previous *Karma* and once again determine the nature of his next birth in the cycle of *samsara*. Thus *Karma* is both fate (the situation of the individual's birth) and actions during life.

For example, a local herbal practitioner in Sunhet is quite severely deformed with stunted legs and a misshapen chest. Of his deformity he said, "In my previous life I must have done many bad deeds, so I was born like this. But it must have been that up to my last life my *karma* was good, so although I was born deformed, I was born into a high Rajput family that had plenty of financial resources to take care of me. *Karma* means "as you sow, so you will reap."

The situation which *karma* determines is the specific *dharam* (S=*svadharma*, "own *dharma*") of the individual. This *dharma*, as Indians tend to translate into English is "one's duty", it includes everything from family, caste, and occupational duties to the observances of religious ceremonies and meritorious action. In a sense the most important of these latter duties is the enactment of the *samskaras*, the rituals of transition from birth to death. More than a duty, these rites are the "dharmic" conditions of his life, prerequisites to socially or ritually "being alive." For the *smaskaras* provide the means of living within the conditions of *samsara,* the forces and conditions of nature and society into which man is born such as the all-pervasive action of purity and pollution. Through the social and ritual defining of the *samskaras*, then, the individual is equipped to live out his own specific *dharam.*

Any deviations of religious significance he makes from his *dharam* are classified as either *pun* (merits) or *pap* (demerits). These categories of religious action, *pun* (S= *punya*) and *pap* (S=*papa*) accruing through optional religious activity are of quantitative value and have the effect of changing one's *karma* in the next life.

At any given point in the imponderably long cyclical time scheme of *samsara*, various different classes of "beings" stand outside the cycle of human life. These "beings" constitute the pantheon, and have the potential of playing important roles in the religious life of each individual. However, the pantheon is not a set of homogenous figures organized into a hierarchy such as an analogy with a potilitical system might yield. The organization is based on qualitative distinctions such that the relationship of the pantheon to *samsara* is not *one* kind of relationship, but many kinds. In fact, as is discussed later, the relationship between each deity (or other type of "being") and *samsara* determines its position and class, and is the basis of the pantheon's structural formation. At this point, it is sufficient to note that each member of the pantheon is related *to samsara* but (temporarily, at least) located *outside* its movement. The pantheon participates in *samsara* as part of its conditions; but at the same time some members of the pantheon have the potential of aiding man in alleviating and escaping those conditions.

For it is precisely escape from the conditions of *samsara* that is the goal of Hinduism. Salvation is freedom (S= *moksa*) from *samsara:* freedom from the cycle of rebirth, freedom from the causal effects of purity and pollution, freedom from the necessity of *karma*.

Defined in this negative fashion, this has always been the goal of the Indian religious tradition (even Buddhism has taken this as its point of departure). However, throughout India's history different *Gurus* and sects have advocated different means of reaching this goal, and Indian philosophy has concerned itself with this same problem. The theoretical formulation presented above is accepted by all as the given, the *a priori* premises upon which the different conclusions have been drawn. These "conclusions" include not only the explicit formulations of the means to salvation, but also the implicit conclusions contained in the religious thought and behavior of the average village Hindu. As a religious system, Hinduism encompasses both the explicit and the implicit, the philosophies and sects which are directly concerned with salvation, and the people for whom salvation is of secondary concern but nevertheless critical factor in their religion. However, I am not merely presenting this as an assumption— this study is in part directed towards demonstrating this statement as a conclusion.

Louis Dumont has stated that

> "group religion" on one side, the "disciplines of salvation" on the other, and finally their interaction... constitute the principal factors of religion in traditional India. (Dumont: 1960, 51)

This statement constitutes a breakthrough in the understanding of the Hindu religion. For in the past (and present) most authors have chosen either one or the other as "true Hinduism" dismissing its opposite as "the philosophical ideal" or "the popular religion of animism" or similarly segregating rubrics. Dumont's insight has been to not only include both "group religion" and "the disciplines of salvation" in the same religion, but to recognize that they are intimately related oppositions whose interaction makes intelligible many aspects of Hinduism.

However, Dumont's formulation is misleading. By "disciplines of salvation" Dumont intends disciplines of "renunciation"— disciplines of salvation which premise their means to this end on the necessary renunciation of social and ritual life, that is, on the realm of *karma*. Throughout Indian religious history there have been formulations of disciplines of salvation which are possible *within* the realm of an individual's *dharmic* conditions, *within* the way of the *samskaras*. This suggests that the opposition could be more correctly formulated as being between the way of the *samskaras* and the way of renunciation. However, this remains a conceptual understanding in the ideational level. Its value is in pointing the direction in which a structural analysis may lead. In fact, it is the purpose of this study to refine and demonstrate this conceptual understanding on a structural level— such that the contradictions and central conflicts signified by this opposition will be seen to underlie and be expressed in many facts of the Hindu religion, from ritual and myth to renascent sects and changes.

As there are many regional variations in Hinduism, this can only be accomplished through the study of a particular area's religion. Thus, this chapter is devoted to giving a picture of the particular religious environment in Kangra as exemplified through Sunhet village.

A. VILLAGE PANTHEON

The existence of local dieties in India has tended to make any particular area's pantheon a mixture of known sanskritic (in the sense of scriptural) figures (pan-Indian) with various lesser members of gradually decreasing geographical spread, lacking in "shastric" (*shastr as* = scriptures) legitimacy. It is this that has led anthropologists to the two-fold division of Great and Little Traditions— a division that others have historicized into "Aryan" and "Dravidian", or valued as "high" and "low", "hinduism" and "animism" (Kolenda: 1964).

However, the division of a specific pantheon in this manner is a very difficult business, due to two features of the Hindu religion: (1) Through the concept of *avatara* (incarnation) and the exceptionally large corpus of mythology, both written and oral, various different deities come to have many forms, stories and names. Thus it often happens that well known gods are known only by locally current names. Marriott comments,

> In Kishan Garhi I was at first nonplussed by villagers' failure to respond to my questions about Siva; later I found I could elicit a great deal of information by asking the same questions about their name for him—Mahadev. Ultimately, I found villagers to be acquainted with quite esoteric lore of the same deity, and to know him also by many other names of uncommon sort, such as Bawa. (in Lewis: 1958, 252)

In addition, even where shastric references cannot be found, there is a strong propensity to identify certain divine figures as manifestations of other figures. Thus, in Kangra, the Jwalaji *devi* is considered in three different yet equally valid ways: as a separate local goddess, as the "flame" manifestation of the goddess whose head is at Chintpurni, and body in Kangra town, and as equivalent to Durga, Kali, Parvati, etc. It will often be found that were there sufficient information, what appears to be a purely local deity or saint in fact has a geographical range which is very surprising even to the Hindu villager. Thus, a Muslim-Hindu deity like *Kwaja*, god of springs, water sources, and ferrymen, and worshipped in Kangra, can be found with a similar position throughout Northern Indian to as far as Bengal (Crooke: 1895, 1.57). And *Guga*, a "divine hero" whose myths refer to local places, and often local family names, can be found as far afield as Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, although often there as well as further in the mountains his name may be different.

This suggests that pantheons differ less than was supposed. On the one hand deities of the "Little Tradition" often have distributions comparable to those of the "Large Tradition" ones, and on the other hand, deities which differ in name are often identified as the same, or as different manifestations of the same deity. However, various members of a local pantheon are formed according to local variables such as local saints, local topographical features, discoveries by local shamans, and the specific ghosts of locally deceased persons. These members usually correspond to those in a different area's pantheon in type, position, and funcion, although not in content.

Thus any given area's pantheon is not a closed set. Depending on the knowledgeability of the individual querried, his caste, family, and inclinations, a variable number of deities will be found. As the villagers do not conceive of these deities in the terms of an organized hierarchy, there are two possible modes of organizing them: according to linguistic classes, and according to their relationship to *samsara*. The criteria of linguistic classes gives us a four-fold classification:

1) The impersonal Godhead, referred to by various names.
2) Those deities for which the terms *deva* and *devi* (god and goddess) are usaually reserved.
3) The many types of supernatural beings which are referred to as *devtas* and not usually called *devas* or *devis*, although *devas* and *devis* are occasionally referred to as *devtas*.

4) The many types of *bhuts*, or ghosts of deceased persons.

Some of these categories, in turn, contain certain sub-categories, the characteristics of which are discussed later. The second criterion is an extension of the first, but considerably more complex. Relationships between members of the pantheon and *samsara* are not on an individual basis, but between types of beings— that is, according to their nominal categories. However, by speaking of the "relationship" of a class of deities to *samsara* as though it were a single relation is misleading. I have used the phrase merely for economy of definition, for a class of deities' relationship to *samsara* includes many relations. It is a way of speaking of a deity's *position*, a position which can only be determined on the structural level by examining all the relations it forms on several different levels, i.e. its mythological relations to other deities, its origin, its ritual uses, and its conceptual position. This sort of complete analysis would, of course, be a lengthy project if a attempted for the whole of the pantheon and out of the range of this study. However, in Chapter 4 a detailed analysis of several related local deities in their mythological contexts has been attempted.

For the purposes of this study, it is sufficient to adopt the organization to the pantheon that is suggested by local language categories. The presentation on page 24, following these criteria, is of a sample Sunhet pantheon. There has been no attempt at completeness; rather, it has been an effort to introduce the principal types of deities with representative local examples. It must be stressed, though, that the hierarchical organization is tentative.

PANTHEON

Class	Sample Deities
1) the impersonal Godhead, the source and end of *samsara*	variously called, with some personal names: *Brahman, Bhagwan, Paratma, Kudah, Iswara,* etc.
2) the *devas* and *devis* (of non-human origin) gods and goddesses	a) *Siva* (also called: *Mahadev, Sankar*) &
	b) *Parvati* (*devi, Durga, Kali, Mata,* as well as specific other devis identified as the same: *Vageswari Devi, Chintpurni devi, Tara Devi, Jawala Devi, Naini Devi, Sitala Mata,* etc)
	c) *Vishnu* (*Krsna, Ram Chandar, Narayan, Narasimha*) &
	d) *Laksmi; Radha*
	e) *Ganesh* (*Ganapati*)
3) the *devtas*	
i) *Sidhs, Naths, Saints, Pirs, Birs, Satis, & Pitar* (of human origin)	a) *Paharia Baba*
	b) *Sindu Baba* (*Sindu Bir*)
	c) *Baba Deot Sidh* (*Baba Balak Nath*)
	d) *Balak Rupi Nath*
	e) *Partri Sidh*
	f) *Gorakh Nath*
	g) *Guga* (and family)
	h) *Silui Pir*
	i) *Sati*
	j) *Kwaja Khizr*
ii) *Nags & Niginis* (snake gods)	a) *Bhaksu Nag*
	b) *Rani Tal Nag*
iii) *Devtas of nature*	a) *Chandar* (moon)
	b) *Beas Daria* (river)
	c) *Bar* tree
	d) *Pial* tree
	e) *Amb* tree
	f) *Tulsi* tree
4) the *bhuts* (*pret, pasach*) malevolent spirits of the dead: ghosts	a) *Churail*
	b) *Batal*
	c) *Masan*

THE VILLAGE PANTHEON: REPRESENTATIONS, DEFINITIONS AND LOCATIONS.

Inasmuch as the pantheon is an open set exhibiting the same categories of deities, if not always the same deities, I will concentrate on describing only some of those which are of particular or unique importance to Kangra from the point of view of Sunhet village.

(1) In the first category, there are of course no temples or images of Brahman. Brahman in the neuter is the undifferentiated, the undefinable— that which subsumes all manifestations and categories into itself. Brahaman stands at the logical limit of the pantheon, and Indian philosphers have often argued that all the rest ofthe pantheon and samsara are but manifestations of Brahman. Few villagers, however, are aware of many of the philosophical implications of Brahman, and tend to understand this "Godhead" in terms of the causal forces of the world or as an anthropomorphic God. Being without representation he is thus not directly worshipped, but often refered to as omniscient and omnipresent. For example, "*Bagwan di marzi*" "it is God's will", is frequently used in the face of unknowns.

(2) The most well known deity in Kangra is the *Jawali Devi*, also called *mataji* (honored mother), whose temple is at Jawala Mukhi, at a distance of seven miles from Sunhet. Here her flame (*jot* or *jwal*) burns constantly in the central temple whose gold-plated roof is said to have been donated by *Akbar*, whereas it was probably *Ranjit Singh*. She is identified with *Kali*, and *Parvati*, the consort of *Siva*, and this flame is considered as her *shakti* (power, life-force) in constant manifestation.

The following story recorded in *Fairs and Festivals of Himachal Pradesh*, and in the temple pamphlet *Jvala Ji ki Amar Kahani* is told told regarding the Devi's origin.

> A long time ago, Daksha Prajapati invited all the gods and kings to join in a great sacrifice (yajna) he was performing. On this occasion he did not invite his daughter, Sati, as she had married the God Siva without his consent. Hearing of this slight, Sati was greatly hurt and told her husband she would join the sacrifice even if she was uninvited. Siva attempted to dissuade her, but to no avail. On reaching her home, Sati found her parents very hostile. Unable to tolerate this hostility, she committed suicide by jumping into the sacrificial fire for the sake of retribution. As soon as she had died, a large flame shot up from her body. Siva, aware of what had happened came and took the body of Sati on his shoulder. He was so outraged that he started the *tandava nritya*, which was to bring destruction on the world. Seeing this destruction, the other gods became afraid, and prayed to Vishnu to save them. Heeding their request, Vishnu took his bow and arrows and started to shoot at Sati. Every time he shot, a piece of Sati came off and fell to the ground, and wherever they fell, Siva established the place as a sacred shrine. In this way, when Vishnu shot off her *jihva*, her "tounge of flame", it fell at the base of a hill and became *Jvala Mukhi* ("mouth of flame") where the town of Jwala Mukhi now stands.

> Similarly, where her eyes fell became Naini Devi; where her mind fell became Chintpurni; and where her body fell became Vajeswari Devi in Kangra.

This myth is found in a great many versions, some of which contain a much expanded geography allocating certain portions of the Devi's body to Kashmir and Assam, although always retaining Jwala Mukhi for the flame. Perhaps the most surprising version is the one recorded by Hutchinson which identified Jalandhara the demon with the goddess :

> The invincibility of Jalandhara was derived from the spotless purity if his wife, Vrinda, which was overcome by the fraud of Vishnu impersonating her husband. The titan was then conquered by Siva who cut off his head, but the head quickly rejoined the trunk, and repeatedly regained its wonted place, after having been dissevered by Siva. To prevent this continuous resuscitation, Siva buried the giant under ground and so vast was his size that his body covered a circuit of 48 kos, or about 64 miles, which is said to be the exact extent of the present pilgrim's route .... The story which I heard in 1846, when I first visited the Kangra Valley, placed the head only of the Titan to the north of the Bias, with his mouth at Jwalamukhi, while his body covered the whole extent of country lying between the Bias and the Satluj; his back being immediately beneath the district of Jalandhar and his feet at Multan. (Hutchinson: 1933, 101)

Within the confines of Jwala Devi's own temple, there are several smaller temples to Siva in the form of the *lingam*, and several images of *ganesa*, the elephant-headed god of beginnings and enterprises. Clustered nearby on the hill side, various other temples and shrines have gradually accumulated: one to *Radha Krishna*, one to *Tara Devi*, one to *Sitala Devi,* small pox goddess; and several to saints who have at one time come in attendance: *Gorakh Baba Nath,* and *Arun Naga.*

The *Devl* is attended by a special caste of *Pujaris* (attendant priests) called *Bojkis.* These *bojkis* perform the daily *pujas* (worships), keep up the temple, and help the thousands of pilgrims who come from all over North India,. It is unclear whether or not they are related to the sect of *Gosains* which up to a hundred years ago were the *pujaris.* Throughout the town surrounding the *Devi* temple, there are the shrines to Siva erected over the bodies of these Gosains buried, according to their unique customs, in the yogic position.

As with any large temple complex, there are numerous stories attached to each particular spot concerning micraculous events, etc. For example, there is one water tank in which the Devi's flame is said to have once appeared to a large number of ardent pilgrims during a festival when the crowd was too large to allow them to reach the temple itself. Recently, most of the stories have centered around the Russian attempts of a few years ago to drill for natural gas on the hill above the temple. During the two years of their partially successful drilling, it is said that the flame never wavered, and the general brunt of most stories is that the irreverent Russians might have done better if they had worshipped the Devi first. (There are, however, more "modern"a Indians who feels that the Russians may just have failed to reach the right strata.)

Associated with the *Jawali Devi* are the *Vajeswari Devi* at the large temple complex in Kangra town, and *Chintpurni Devi* at the temples on the top of a ridge about eight miles the other direction from Sunhet. These are considered to represent the place where the Devi's body and head fell, respectively, in the myth of the Devi's origin already recorded. Both these temple complexes are similar to the *Jwali Devi* temple, and contain additional representations of *Siva*, *Ganesa*, *Sitala Mata*, etc. They are particularly famous for stories of ardent devotees who have sacrificed their tongues to the goddess only to receive them back within a couple weeks.The most recent of these concerns an army officer stationed in Burma who, captured by the Japanese, promised his tongue to the Devi if he returned alive. When he escaped and returned he carried out his vow and received his tongue back within a week. This story is believed even by the skeptical, for as they say, "he lives right over there." Many of the repairs and constructions needed in the temples have their source in vows such as this one — or, more commonly, prayers for the birth of a son. In addition, donations are considered very meritorious and temples are full of plaques recording especially important ones.

LAKSMI NARAYAN

In addition to these Devi temples there is a large temple complex within a distance of ten miles devoted to *Siva, Radha Krishna,* and *Laksmi Narayan* (these latter two being well known incarnations of *Vishnu* and his consort). The story behind the images (*murti*) in the *Laksmi Narayan* follow the common pattern of having been found in a field by a farmer plowing, and moving under their own locomotion to the present spring. Here as elsewhere, the temple has large landholdings and receives the income from land which it leases to tenents. The most notable feature of the Laksmi Narayan temple is the hundreds of bats which are to be found (only) here on the surrounding trees. The story is that in former lives, these bats were all corrupt *patwaris* (keepers of land records) and shopkeepers, who are now suffering the immeasurable indignity of hanging upside down so that they cannot be parted from their excretion.

Within the village of Sunhet itself, and throughout Kangra, there are also a special variety of temples called *Thakurdwara*. "*Thakur*" has a number of meanings, and is used mainly as a respectful form of address, both for high caste persons and deities. (It also means boar and could have connotations of Vishnu's incarnations in that form). "Dwara" is sanskrit for "door"; thus "thakurdwara" refers to temples which allow admittance only to the higher castes. The one in Sunhet is dedicated to *Radhakrisna*, but also contains images of *Ganesa* and *Sivalingam*. The pujari is a *Sadhu* from U. P. who arrived two years ago and maintains himself on donations as well as produce from the *thakurdwara's* lands which he farms.

PATTERNS OF WORSHIP

The patterns of worship for these deities in the second category are generally more formalized since the deity is almost always represented in a temple or shrine with an attendant *pujari*.

Official *pujas* in the smaller temples are fairly simple and occur usually twice a day — in the morning, and in the evening. After cleaning the emple, the *pujari* lights some incense and rings the bells hanging near the threshhold before entering. (Sometimes he will first circumambulate the outside of the temple with incense and a hand-bell). Upon entering the temple, he worships the image by prostrating and raising his joined palms to his forehead (called *mata teka karna*). This is followed by the *arti* ceremony in front of the image — the *arti* being a form of worship in which the ritual presentation (in this case, incense) is circled clockwise in front of the object of worship. Then the *prasad*, usually composed of grains and sugar, cooked or uncooked, is offered to the deity and then made ready for distribution to the worshippers. In larger temples, more elaborate ceremonies are performed, often to the accompaniment of musical instruments and hymn singing. Flowers, vermillian, and holy water are often offered to the image as well as a yak's tail broom used to purity the area.

Once the official *puja* has been finished, the *pujari* takes a seat next to the image and the lay-worshippers may enter. After saluting (*mata teka*) they offer the image appropriate presentation, money, fruit, grain, flowers, coconuts, etc., depending on the deity, and receive in return from the pujari a *tikka* (forehead mark), a spoonful of holy water, and some *prasad* that has been given to the deity. If the interior of the temple is large enough to house other shrines and images, the worshipper then circumambulates the inside of the temple clockwise, stopping at each image to *mata teka* and perhaps offer a small coin. During festivals and special days, these same actions are performed with the addition of special offerings and special *prasad* — often with a continuous *bajan* (hymn-sing) being conducted in the courtyard.

(3) In the third category are deities whose mythological background is not generally found in the *Shastras*, like those in the above group. As these are an important new source for understanding Kangra religion, and are quite lengthy, I have devoted a later chapter to explicating and analyzing them. Thus, at this point, only a few superficial definitions are offered. Unlike the deities in the second category, these deities are candidates for *kul devtas* (family deities); there are no *gram devtas* (village deities) in Kangra.

PAHARIA BABA

The *murti* (image) that represents *Paharia Baba* is a stone covered with vermillion usually placed at the base of a Pipal tree, but sometimes isolated in an individual shrine. It is unclear to most villagers who *Paharia* was (*baba* is a term of address for holy men), but some stated that he was originally an attendant of Brahma. A school teacher in the village stated that he had once seen Paharia when he was studying in the seventh class. He had gone out for a walk late at night, and saw Paharia asleep in a bed in a tree, all dressed in white, with a long white beard. He stated that this vision came as a reward for the daily *pujas* he used to do to Paharia, and he now regrets that he ran away frightened, "for I might have gained some powers if I had stayed there." In this connection, it is noteworthy that the shaman in the area claims Paharia as his tutelary god and the source of his power.

Paharia is worshipped regularly by women who offer orange flowers, incense, and water ot the deity. He is primarily considered to be an agricultural god, and the first harvest of the sea-son is offered to him by either males or females in the form of cooked bread (either corn or wheat) and *halva* (wheat cooked with *ghi*, clarified butter, and sugar). These offerings then become *prasad* and are eaten by the worshippers and offered to neighbors or visitors.

Sindhu Baba is a considerably more obscure *devta* without any local representations, and, as far as I know, has no local worshippers. He is known to live in trees, and his trademark is a whistling noise. Apparently he is better known in the Dhaula Dhar ridge, where he is the source of "bad winds, which no man can live through."

SIDHS AND NATHS

Baba Deot Sidh, and to a lesser extent, *Balak Rupi Nath*, and *Gorakh Nath Partri Sidh* are of considerable importance to the people of Sunhet and the whole of Kangra, especially as *kul devtas* (U.= *khandani devtas*). A *sidh* is a saint who has acquired special powers (S= *siddha*); and *nath* is a term of deference applied to certain saints meaning "lord" or "master". Each of these saints' "life-story" gives evidence of these powers, often in connection with bovine or human fertility, and their myths have been examined in detail in a later chapter.

Baba Deot Sidh, or, as he is also called, *Baba Balak Nath* is represented throughout Kangra by a square stone upon which the image of two feet has been carved. Often, there is a trident showing the deity's relationship to *Siva*, and at times a snake. Some of these family images are covered by a pair of wooden sandals. He is worshipped with incense, orange flowers, white string and water, and, at his main temple fifty miles from Sunhet, with money. At harvests, many families offer him the *naya fassal* (new harvest, of either corn or wheat) cooked with raw molasses. His domain is particularly human fertility, cow's milk, and general health, i. e. protection from attacks by ghosts and evil spirits. For this last purpose there are special amulets (called a *singhi*) which are worn by devotees and put on children, often containing an appropriately blessed and dedicated written *mantra*.

Balak Rupi Nath and *Partri Sidh* are worshipped in the same manner, and also have main temples erected in their name. However, in contrast to *Baba Deot Sidh*, they are always represented in covered shrines, either inside houses or in small temples, by carved images and vermillion covered stones.

A basically similar type of deity is the *pir* and *bir*. *Pir* refers to a Muslim saint whereas *bir* refers to a Hindu one. The similarity of the titles as well as the juxtaposition of peoples of both religions until the resettlements into Pakistan and India has often meant that a considerable confusion surrounds these saints, and the names have changed often as well as sometimes existing simultaneously. The only deity of this type that was important to Sunhet was *Silui Pir* located on the top of a hill about nine miles away. Cow and buffalo milk are regularly offered to him, as it is widely believed that failure to do so will result in infertility or bad milk.

Kwaja, god of springs and patron of ferrymen, is also a Muslim deity of the same variety. (when the question came up in the village an impassioned argument ensued — some stating that he was a Muslim, and others declaring that he was a Hindu with an Urdu name.) He is primarily invoked in the dedication of new water sources. The following is a description of the *puja* at one such dedication — illustrating similar types of *pujas* to other deities.

> The Rajput who was acting as the officient approached the spring with a tray containing the *puja* articles, covered by leaves. First he took a thin stick of incense and having lit it, stuck it in a crack on one of the inner walls. He was then handed a long white shawl folded into a one-foot square and proceeded to put this on top of his head — even though he was already wearing a turban (P.= *safa*). Facing the right—hand inner wall, he made three mounds of *prasad* (consisting of a thick creamy paste of corngrain, *ghi,* and sugar), and placed one flower on the top of each mound. (Later discussion agreed that there should have been five mounds.) Laying this down on the outer edge of the spring, he turned ninety degrees so that he was facing the back wall of the spring (and after some promptings from onlookers) addressed himself to the god: "Let there always be water here, and defend this construction against evil doers." Having invoked the *devta*, he placed some of the *prasad* on the leaves for the highcaste onlookers, and then walked around giving *prasad* to the children and members of the lower castes.

SATIS AND PITR

Satis are women who offered themselves upon their husband's funeral pyre and thus became saints with certain powers. My information on specific *satis* worshipped by particular families is incomplete. But I am aware that there are several small shrines in the area of the village which are dedicated to *satis* and are worshipped particularly at weddings, in conncetion with fidelity and fertility. *Pitr* (S.=father) are male ancestors whose worship is carried on during their funeral and in yearly ceremonies after that. These are described in connection with the death ceremonies.

GUGGA

Gugga, the warrior who was forced to kill his twin cousins (who is also dealt with in detail in the fourth chapter) is depicted on his horse, usually surrounded by his wife, sister, and guru. There is a temple with these images on top of a small densely jungled hill within the boundaries of Sunhet, as well as a more elaborate one four miles across the river. The position of *pujari* (attendant priest) has been held hereditarily by a Rajput family (an impossiblility in regard to deities in the second category) who maintain the shrine. Brief *pujas* are performed twice a day to "wake" the image, and"to put him to sleep"with incense, and sometimes *maiti* (white) flowers, white thread corn grain, wheat grain, money and sweets. The *pujari's* main function of becomming possessed during the special Gugga fair is described later. As the *pujari* is also an agriculturalist, he is not a full-time attendent and individual worshippers will come to the temple even when he is not there.

Gugga is considered to have special powers in relation to snake bites. Although some better educated villagers go to the civil government doctor if bitten by a snake, a great number of villagers still go to Gugga — while the more cautious go to both. Gugga, like other deities, can also form special relationships to a family. The following story illustrates one such relationship. Although the teller was a very modern young army officer, it must be remembered that miraculous events which would not be believed if they occurred in the present are often believed possible in the past.

> My great-grandfather used to sleep in the fields in order to protect them from deer and wild boar, as is still done in the wilder parts of Kangra. Once while he was sleeping, he was wakened by a *bhut* (ghost) who asked him to fight with him. My great-grandfather, like the people in those days, was a peaceful man who didn't want to fight. So he asked, "who are you ? I don't wish to fight." The ghost answered, "I am a *bhut.*" So he said, "I will fight with you." They fought all through the night and towards morning the ghost drew back for the final charge. My great-grandfather knew that this charge would kill him so he offered a prayer to the *Guga* who lives in the temple above the Chamba ferry. Gugga came gallopping on his white horse and killed the *bhut*. Since this time my family has always gone every year at this time to worship Gugga there.

NAGS AND NAGINIS

Nags and *Naginis* are snake gods and goddesses (S. *naga*= snake) which are propitiated with *tandar* (cooked wheat and molasses) so that snakes won't enter the house or bite any member of the family. There are several anonymous *nags* signified by carved images of snakes on stone slabs, usually placed under trees. Several *nags*, such as *Bhaksu Nag* and *Rani Tal Nag* are famous and have specific temples devoted to them, although there are none near Sunhet. At these temples there are many stories of the *pujari's* control of snakes, and of micraculous events which have happened.

SACRED TREES

Although not strictly members of the pantheon, the sacred trees are often spoken of as *devtas* and are occasionally referred to in anthropomorphic forms— hence their inclusion here.

The most often worshipped trees are the *pipal* (*ficus religiosa*), the *bar* (*Bengalensis*), the *amb* (*mango*), and the *tulsi* (*Ocymum sanctum*). The first three of these are regularly planted in public places and surrounded by a stone platform (*tayara*) as acts of merit, and are often found growing together in what is described as a "marriage" (*biyah*). The *tulsi* is found in most higher caste courtyards planted on the top of a specially constructed pedestal, called a *thara* or *chibutra,* and is sometimes referred to in Sanskrit literature as the *bhutaghni* ("destroyer of *bhuts* or evil spirits"). (Crooke: 1895, 11.110). All of these trees are considered to have various curative properties and to be the abode of other *devtas*— such that they also have protective powers against malevolent spirits. For example, when our cook developed a pain in his shoulder he was told to take the leaves of the mango, rub them together for an hour and apply them to the spot—repeating this process for a week. Educated villagers stressed these curative properties as the rationale for tree worship, explaining that they worshipped the *pipal* and *bar* because it was the one tree that gave off oxygen both during the day and night, unlike other trees which gave off nitrogen at night.

The trees are worshipped by pouring water on their roots and by circumambulating the tree three (or four) times in a clockwise fashion. Usually during this circumambulation, white thread (*kaccha daga*) is wrapped around the trunk, and either tied or fastened to parts of the bark. Sometimes red flowers and cotton are inserted in the string, and corn flour is given. Generally, the worship is only carried out by women. Although inquiries suggest that the practice is becoming quite rare, there is no doubt that these trees, in particular the *tulsi* and the *pipal* are occasionally married to girls whose horoscope is not favorable or to men who wish to marry for the third time, and yet want to avoid the inauspicious consequences of a third marriage. (Crooke: 1885, II 115–9; Rose: 1919, 136)

BHUTS

Bhuts (also called *pret* and *pasach*, all three words extant in Sanskritic literature) are malevolent spirits of the dead who had died untimely deaths. (The nature of this untimeliness and the logic behind becoming a *bhut*, as well as the means of their manipulation by *shamans*, is discussed in detail later.) Although the word *bhut* is used as a general category for all types of ghosts, strictly speaking, it only refers to adult males who died unexpectedly, i.e. as a result of an accident. Some of these *bhuts* are referred to more specifically as *gada batal bhut*. Those men, who, for reasons to be elucidated later, are not fully consumed in the funeral pyre, are called *masand*. A *batalu* is a child of either sex who has become a *bhut*; while a *curail* is a female spirit who has died during pregnancy, childbirth, or the days of pollution immediately following childbirth. As any woman dying during this period is almost guaranteed to become a *curail*, this type of spirit is perhaps the most common.

Descriptions of *bhuts* vary considerably. Some consider that they are almost always invisible, retaining the power of speech only. Others, associating them primarily with funeral sites, consider them to be black, covered with ashes, and having a human appearance. There is general agreement, however, that the *curail* looks like a woman except that her feet point backwards and her breasts are often so long that they hang to the ground, and are thus carried flung back over the shoulders. She is said to cook her food by burning her leg, and to make noises that sound like cats.

The primary danger from *bhuts* is that they will either harm you (a rare occurence) or attack you by possessing you. The later happens with relative frequency, and must be dealt with by various means usually involving a *shaman* (*cela*), which I have described later. The attack can be provoked by loud talking at night, or by carrying fresh meat which would attract the ghosts — but often occur unprovoked. They are mainly a threat at night, and especially tend to inhabit funeral sites and dark secluded springs. There are, of course, a considerable number of stories. The following are a sample:

> A man from Kholar Bher was going to a spring near the village at night. As he walked past a stand of bamboo there was suddenly a great deal of noise — rocks being thrown from above, bamboo stalks hitting each other, and branches being broken off from surrounding trees. Then a voice came in the darkness, "Today you have escaped, in the future you will not, if you ever pass this spot at night." The man ran home and collapsed with a sickness which lasted a week.

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A woman returning to her home in Nadaun at night was hailed by a marriage party camped near the spring behind our camp. They urged her to share their meal with them, which she did. Before leaving for Nadaun she accepted some food to take home, wrapping it in her shawl. When she reached her home she told people about meeting the marriage party and the food they had given her—but when see opened her shawl to give them some food. she only found pebbles with various sorts of mud and dirt sprinkled on top.

A couple of years before our arrival, the headman and his friend the shaman went down to the *pipal* tree about 200 yards from our camp to do a *puja.* With them they had fruit, banana leaves, and other *puja* articles. An army captain who lived in the village was returning home on leave and had walked down from Chintpurni in hope of some game on the way. He was wearing his combat uniform and carrying his gun, and happened to step out of the jungle directly beside the *pipal* tree. At his appearance, the shaman ran in one direction, and the headman in another although the Capatain called out to them explaining who he was. They did not believe him until he appeared in the village carrying the discarded *puja* articles.

RELATIONSHIP OF PUJAS TO PANTHEON

For the unique admixture of Hindu and Theravada Buddhist Pantheon among the Sinhalese in Ceylon, both Yalman (1964) and Ames (1964) have demonstrated how a rather precise hierarchical pantheon can be discovered through examining the kind and mode of offering and specialist attached to each deity. This procedure involves a kind of matrix whereby the deities are listed vertically and the appropriate box is filled in under a horizontal listing of types of offering and specialists. The pantheon is then categorized and ranked according the relative purity of the offerings and officients.

Applying this method as a check to categories of language classes listed previously does not work as neatly as in the Sinhalese situation, but still confirrms our classification. For forms of worship there are: prostrations, circumambulations, ringing bells and singing, *mata teka*, *arti*, and offerings,. However, each of these forms at one time or another is used for each of the members of the pantheon and thus reveals nothing. For types of offerings we have: incense, money, coconuts, *divas*, sweets, fried rice, fruit, uncooked grains, cooked gtains, flowers (white and red). white thread and cotton. Among these the only distinctions of purity which can be meaningfully made, at least along this axis, is between the cooked and the uncooked grain (as the distinctions between the white and red flowers are usually disregarded). Possible officients are: Brahman *pujaris,* Rajput *pujaris,* anyone (no *pujari*), and *chelas* (who may come from any caste). Thus, for a slightly shortened form of the pantheon we have the following matrix:

	grain	officiant
(1) Brahman	—	—
(2) Devi	* uncooked	Brahman
Siva	* uncooked	Brahman
Laksmi Narayan	* uncooked	Brahman
(3) Gugga	uncooked/cooked	Rajput
Deot Sidh	cooked	anyone
Paharia	cooked	anyone
Kwaja	cooked	Rajput/anyone
Nags	cooked	anyone
Pipal	cooked	anyone
(4) Bhuts	—	chela

Presented in this abreviated form, the correspondences are obvious. Whereas cooked food can be presented by lay worshippers to deities in the third category, this can only be presented by Brahmans in the second; and whereas Rajputs can officiate to any of the *devtas*, only Brahmans can be the pujaris for *devas* and *devis*. This corresponds with the caste system, in which all castes can accept uncooked grains from all other castes, while cooked grain is only accepted from higher castes, or castes which are immediately below the ones concerned. (Marriott, in Singer: 1968). Furthermore, according to Harper's results (1964), it suggests that the relativity of purity and pollution extend into the pantheon, i.e. only a Brahman is pure enough to give cooked grain to *Devi*, whereas a Rajput is pure enough relative to the *devtas* in the third category to offer cooked food. This conception is substantiated by the fact that during some exorcisms, meat is offered to *bhuts* by *chelas* as offerings (meat being the most polluting, and *chelas* being of indiscriminate castes.

However, several cautionary remarks must be made. Despite the *Devi's* repugnance to meat at this point (no meat is sold on Tuesdays in her honor), there are indications that in the past she did not have this inhibion — and it is true that in the neighboring Chamba, meat is offered to the *Devi* as well as to *Siva*. A possible explanation for this situation lies in the recent revaluation of meat (a conclusion also suggested by the fact that local Brahmans eat it heartily) rather than a radical change in the structural relationships.

B. NORMAL RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY

Except for increased activity during festivals, there is no yearly patterns of worship for deities in the second category. Personal motivation (and usually, more importantly, the wife's devoutness) as well as practical opportunities govern frequency of trips to the temples. Generally speaking, the women are considerably more ardent and are likely to spend more time and energy on these *pujas*.

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*Only Brahman *Pujaris* can offer cooked grains.

To a lesser extent this is also true for the deities of the third category. Although for some, special days of the week are assigned for *pujas*, worship proceeds according to family traditions and inclinations. However, deities with more strictly established domains such as Paharia with the harvest and Guga with snakebites, do receive *pujas* according to appropriate seasons or circumstances . When a family has a *kul devta* installed in a shrine within the home rather than appropriate outside locations (most families will have both), then there is usually some sort of brief daily *puja* even if this only means that one member of the family is responsible for lighting some incense and a *diva* (clay oil lamp) before the image.

Additionally, the initiation or completion of various constructions and projects, such as house-building, or the dedication of the spring to *Kwaja* already described, call for special *pujas*. The most important category of *pujas* of this type, called an *auti*, concerns any structure in which the regular use of fire is involved, like a hearth, oven, or the simple refinery constructed to boil sugar cane down into molasses. These *autis* are directed to the *Jawali Devi* as well as to *Agni* (the Vedic fire god). The offerings consist of *ghi* and *gur* (clarified butter and molasses) and are inserted in the first fire with the classic *mantra om swaha*.

Ritual activity is primarily centered around the *samskaras*, which are examined in the next chapter. Except for birth and death, these *samskaras* occur according to the prescriptions governing the life-cycle ceremonies, personal circumstances, and horoscope readings. These latter astrological forces effectively rule out large blocks of time as inauspicious, and except for he uncontrolable events of birth and death, tend to schedule events such that there are fluries of ritual activity at auspicious times throughout the year.

In addition to the *samskaras* and the festivals which occur on a calendrical (also astrologically determined) basis, there is room for a limited amount of individually initiated worship. These primarily take the form of *kathas*, *jags*, and *bajans*, each of which can be performed individually ,but often occurring together. A *katha* (lit. "story") is a *puja* accompanied by a storytelling; a *jag* is a feast; and a *bajan* is a hymn singing session.

A *katha* is considered to be held for purposes of merit (*pun*) or religious edification, and is dedicated to a specific god— necessarily of the second category as the story telling is taken from religious literature, primarily the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, or one of the *Puranas*. The auspicious times for holding a *katha* are the first and last of each Hindu month, as well as the full moon.

When the arrangements have been made, the family Brahman priest (the *kul purohit*) is called along with whatever guests have been invited. A picture of the deity is installed in a section of the house or outside in the courtyard, and the Brahman arranges the appropriate *puja* articles and diagrams before the god (which will be described in the next chapter). He then performs a *puja* to the god, by lighting some incense and a *diva*, ringing a bell, and chanting Sanskrit *mantras*. This is often a very elaborate *puja* along the lines of those performed during the *samskara* ceremonies. Usually it involves the ritual participation of one member of the family which is holding the *katha* to invoke special blessings on the household.

Following the *puja* there is generally a lengthy session of scriptural reading in Sanskrit and exegesis alternating between Hindi, Pahari, and Punjabi. If the Brahman can sing, he will often intersperse his story with songs taken from the text which is a passage relating to the particular god being worshipped. The priest usually brings to bear a good many standard analogies as well as his own exhortations and "sermons". In one *katha* I attended the Brahman had "brought his message up to date" by using an electrical analogy (although electricity had not yet reached the village). He stated that the Paramatma or Iswara (the Great Soul) was like the powerstation at Jogindarnagar, while each individual soul (*atma*) was like individual lamps. No matter whether each individual turned the switch on or off, the power was always there.

Upon the completion of the *katha,* the head of the household performs *arti* to the image with a tray on which a lit *diva* has been placed. After circling it in front of the image he proceeds around to everyone present, who leave a few small coins for the Brahman priest and take *darsan* by holding both hands over the flame and then passing their hands in front of their faces, as though rubbing it. The *prasad* which had been offered to the god during the preliminary *puja* is then passed out starting with the god himself. Often it consists of two separate dishes: one of sweetened curds, and one of grain fried in *ghi*. If there is to be a *jug* (feast), it is then passed out. The men generally sit around smoking and talking while the women hold a *bajan* of local Pahari religious songs.

RELIGIOUS SPCIALISTS: PUROHITS AND SADHUS

Every family of high caste has a hereditary family priest (*kul purohit*) who is called for most *samskaras, kathas,* or whenever else he might be needed. This *purohit* is a Brahman of the highest sub-caste and generally lives in a hamlet of fellow Brahmans two to four miles away. As his assistant, and if necessary, substitute, the *kul purohit* has an association with another Brahman who is called the *padah*. These Brahmans are paid for their services in kind and in cash at each event they officiate. Monetary remuneration is low, and many of them maintain a portion of their own family lands if possible. However, most villagers nevertheless complain of the expense involved in calling *purohits* (generally comparing it to older pre-inflationary fees) and the Brahman is still very much the brunt of jokes concerning avarice. The training that each *purohit* receives is primarily from his father.

A hereditary relationship between client and Brahman is also maintained with the relatively lower caste *Charj* (short for *Achariya*) Brahman. The Charj Brahman is called for all death ceremonies, a function that *kul purohits* will not perform, and through the consequent pollution are considered as a separate sub-caste. In addition to some cash, these Brahmans are paid with the bed, bedding, clothing, and some of the other household utensils of the deceased.

In contrast to the Brahmans, the itinerant *sadhus* (ascetics and holy men) are not a part of the social structure, although they may establish temporary relationships with villages, temples, or families. Originally from any part of India, the majority of them only pass through the area in pilgrimage to various temples, living off alms from the people. (During our stay in the village, one party of five *sadhus* arrived on an elephant and were put up for a night in an empty house.) However, some of them establish themselves as *pujaris* of temples, or merely take up residence near a temple or in a village. I visited one such *Sadhu* who had rediscovered and excavated an old temple at Chinyari, near Hamirpur. This was the story told of him:

> Five months ago a sadhu came to this area and inquired from a local cowherding boy where he could sleep. The boy said that the sadhu could come to his village, but if he didn't want that, then there was an old shrine down in the jungle where he could perhaps stay. The sadhu agreed to the latter, and asked the boy to direct him there. But the boy said he couldn't or his cows would wander off. The sadhu told him not to worry about that, but to go ahead and take him, for the cows would be there when he returned — which they were. That night the sadhu dreamed that under the small top of the shrine he was sleeping next to there was a temple to Siva with a spring flowing into a large constructed pool. So, from the next morning, he started digging. Whenever people came to ask if he wanted anything, he told them to help him dig. Soon it was discovered that when people would dig for the sadhu they would often be cured of diseases and attacks by ghosts, and the sadhu commanded quite a large labor force which would occassionally even include quite high government officials anxious for a cure.

When I arrived, a large temple had been excavated below which was a very deep pool which was filled from a spring running underneath the temple. There was an inscription on the pool in an old Sanskrit script stating that it was built 600 years ago. The sadhu stated that indeed people were cured from working on the temple, "but not by me, by Sankarji's (Siva's) grace." He added that he had had another dream informing him of a temple and pool below this one, dedicated to Vishnu and having steps made of gold. Thus, excavation is still proceeding, but the results are not as yet in.

C. FESTIVAL CYCLE

What Redfield and Lewis have described as the great and little tradition festivals might more aptly be distinguished as festivals and fairs. A reasonable criterion for this distinction, then, might be distribution. Although festivals are often associated with special celebrations in one place, their differentiating characteristic is that on the same day they are celebrated in homes and other locations. Fairs, in contrast, are a strictly local event, occurring only at one location, and do not necessariyly (however infrequent this may be in fact) have to contain a religious element. This distinction corresponds only roughly to the Punjabi and Hindi *tyohar* (festival) and *mela* (fair), for unlike the anthropologist, the villager is relatively unconcerned as to which celebrations are spread over a large area. This distinction, then, has the advantage of forestalling arbitrary divisions based on incomplete data of surrounding areas and the criteria of whether or not a myth has been amply recorded in the *Puranic* literature.

For the people of Sunhet, there appear to be about twenty festivals which are shared with the surrounding districts of Himachal Pradesh and (with perhaps the elimination of one or two) the Punjab. In addition to the festivals, there are a large number of specifically located fairs (one within Sunhet itsef) such that if one drew a circle around the village with about a five-mile radius, there would probably be about ten to fifteen separate fairs, four to five of which play much importance in Sunhet's life. A fair, or *mela*, though usually of religious significance is characterized in most people's minds by the setting up of temporary stalls (containing everything from food to clothing, jewelry, and wooden ferris wheels) in a traditional location. In this sense, one or two of the fairs occur simultaneously with a festival, such as the large mela at Kaleswar which occurs on *Baisakhi*.

With the recent Indian Government Census Office's publications on Fairs and Festivals of each district in the states of Himachal pradesh and Punjab, there is available for the first time extensive information not only on the festivals but on every local fair of significance. The Himachal Pradesh publication, although not containing Kangra due to its prior Punjab jurisdiction, is particularly excellent in its wealth of exhaustive detail (over 600 large pages). As it would be repetitious as well as forbiddingly lengthy to duplicate any significant amount of this material, this study merely seeks to sketch an introduction to the festival cycle, referring the reader to the above volumes for the details of the celebrations and the many mythological accounts which are their rationales.

The following is a list of the festivals as well as a few of the local fairs around Sunhet. An asterisk refers to a fair coincident with a festival, and parentheses distinguish separate fairs.

Festivals and Fairs	**Hindu Month**	**English Month**
Nauratra *	Cait	March-April
Baisakhi *	Basakh	April-May
(Madini da mela)	Basakh	April-May
Nirjila Ekadshi	Jeth	May-June
(Chanoti da Fera)	Jeth	May-June
(Naker da Mela)	Jeth	May-June
Chirhnu or Tij	Sravan	July-Aug.
Nag Panchmi	Sravan	July-Aug.
Rakhi or Raksha Bandan	Sravan	July-Aug.
Janam Ashtami	Bhadon	Aug-Sept.
Guga Naomi *	Bhadon	Aug-Sept.
Sair	Asauj	Sept-Oct.
Nauratra *	Asauj	Sept-Oct.
Dasehra	Asauj	Sept-Oct.
Karva Chauth	Katak	Oct-Nov.
Divali	Katak	Oct-Nov.
(Garli da mela)	Katak	Oct-Nov.
Godhan	Katak	Oct-Nov.
Bhai Duj	Katak	Oct-Nov.
Panch Bhisham	Katak	Oct-Nov.
Lohri/Nasrant	Poh	Dec-Jan.
Sakrant	Magh	Jan-Feb.
Basant Panchami	Magh	Jan-Feb.
Siv Ratri	Phagan	Feb-March.
Holi	Phagan	Feb-March.

It is not my intention (nor have I amassed the vast quantity of detailed data that would be necessary) to provide a theoretical analysis of these festivals. Clearly, any sort of comprehensive analysis would have to look for meaning not only on the level of myth and ritual, but also in the realm of social structure and economic cycles and expect a large variety of complex interrelationships (as well as the lack of them) between these "levels". At this point I merely wish to note a few recurring points of emphasis within the festivals which would be worth while to examine in such a detailed analysis: 1) the patttern of a fast followed by a meal of special foods, often in the form of the god's *prasad,* 2) the worship of deities (such as *agni* and *Luxmi*) and the incorporation of Sanskritic elements which appear at no other times, (3) religious *pujas* which appear to be non-directed, i. e. refer to no specific member of the pantheon, and thus may be directed to symbols (however opaque) which refer to other realms such as human fertility (Sakrant and Panch Bhisham), (4) consistent emphasis on agnate relations (inviting sisters and daughters home) versus affinal—an emphasis which may be related to the problem of the maternal uncle occurring in some of the myths (Krsna and Gugga), which is even more specifically celebrated in 5) the festivals which deal with brother-sister relationships (Rakhi and Bhai Duj), (6) the special behavioral norms operative during some festivals, and (7) the local myths which accrue around each festival and its deity.

Nauratra: This is the first and less auspicious of the nine-day festivals (*nau*=nine, *ratra*= nights) dedicated to the goddess Durga. This lesser occasion is characterized by trips to the Devi's temples, such as Jawala Mukhi and Chintpurni, where all the social and economic aspects of a *mela* are also in full swing. Many families perform their own *pujis* to the Devi, followed by a special meal. Girls before the age of puberty are considered as temporary incarnations of the goddess, and as such are the recipients of charity from pilgrims and others. It is considered an auspicious time to begin anything new, like new alliances, projects, constructions, etc.

Baisakhi: Baisakhi occurs on the first of Basakh (always 13 April) which corresponds to first day of the year on the Bikrami calendar, during the ripening of the *rabi* (spring) harvest. Daughters and sisters are invited home and given gifts; and villagers line the roads to practice the charity of water giving to pilgrims and travellers. If possible, people take a sacred bath in rivers and tanks which are considered especially sacred. For the people of Sunhet, this bath is taken in the Beas where it is holiest near the temple village of Kaleswar which at this time is the site of a large and famous *mela,* in part, dedicated to Siva as well as to the river. The *mela* is a very festive social and religious occasion, and is often followed by a special meal at home.

Nirjila Ekadshi: Nirjila (lit. "without water) Ekadshi is a fast observed by some on the eleventh day of the bright half of Jeth. Two different mythological events are held by different persons as its source. One recounts the escape of Krsna from Kal Yawan; the other, although including Vishnu, celebrates the gods' escape from the demon Mridumanya through the help of the virgin goddess Ekadshi.

(*Chanoti da Fera and Naker da Mela*)*:* These two *melas* occurring during separate weeks in Jeth are not specifically religious. The first occurs in Sunhet (on the grounds where we were camped) and consists of various stalls and entertainments, including the popular wrestling matches originally between just village men but now amongst paid professionals. It was started by a respected Rajput about twenty years ago and is now managed by the village *panchayat* (government authorized council.) The second is similar and takes place in a stream bed across the river.

Chirhnu or Tij: On this day (Sravan 3) the cattle are cleaned and the fleas and lice (*chirhnu* or *chiran*) are picked off them to be ceremoniously burnt either in cow dung balls or earthen pots. During the burning, incense is lit and special cakes (*babru*) are distributed. Daughters and sisters are also invited home where swings are set up for the women. They are given a certain laxity and many songs are sung which, generally voice complaint of in-laws or concern love stories. A special meal follows.

Nag Panchmi: This festival is primarily a day devoted to the propitiation of nags (snakes). Family representatives perform this special *puja* with milk, flowers, water, and vermillion. In places where there are nag temples, such as Raini Tal and Dharmsala, there is often a *mela* acompanying the elaborate *pujas*. Sravan is in the midst of the monsoons, a time when snakes are most abundant.

Rakhi or Raksa Bandon: Raksa Bandon (lit. "protection tying") occurs on the day in Sravan which marks the changeover into the fall crop. On this day Brahmans tie *raksas* or *rakhis* (yellow threads which may contain tassels or other decorations) on their clients in exchange for a gift of money. This is said to repeat the paradigmatic act when the dog tied a *raksa* on Indra before he entered battle to give him protection. Of more significance in most people's minds than the Brahman's *rakhi* is the *rakhis* which sisters (real and classificatory) tie on their brother's arm in return for a gift of money. This is a universal practice and is said to signify the brother's readiness to protect his sister. There is generally a fairly large feast on this day.

Janam Ashtami: This pan-Indian festival celebrates the safe birth of Lord Krsna. Krsna's maternal uncle, *Kansa*, had been forewarned that his slayer would be Krsna, and thus it was only through the last minute substitution of another baby that the baby Krsna was saved from being killed by his uncle. Most people observe a fast on this day, and the women often assemble for *bajans* or *Kirtans* singing songs in praise of Krsna. Sometimes a particularly devout family will arrange for Brahmans or Sadhus to come and recite stories. A *puja* with singing is held at the temple until twelve o'clock, the time of Krsna's birth, when the fast is broken with *prasad*,fruit, and milk.

Gugga Naomi: The *naomi* (lit. "ninth"), considered the day of Gugga's birth, is actually the last day of a festival which commences up to ten days before in celebration of Guga, whose myth is examined in a later chapter. In addition to individual *pujas*, a group formed from a single caste (in Sunhet's, it was *julas*, or weavers) perform a *puja* every morning with the *pujari* and during the day go around the village playing musical instruments and singing songs about Guga. With them they carry a *chari*, a long rod that is bent over in the top like the hood of a cobra and wrapped with threads and perhaps feathers, and also a leaf unmbrella. From each house they receive some grain or money. On the last day, there is often a *mela* at the temple with a number of stalls. Following this, there is a special service which lasts most of the night in which songs are sung and music played until Guga is ready to come to the oracles (the *kelne-wallas*, lit. "ones who play" meaning both the regular *pujari* and any others who may be visited). When the oracle is possessed, with the accompaniment of drums, incense, and with a good deal of shaking, he answers queries concerning the crops, rains, prices, and occasionally is beseeched for a son.

In this connection it may be of value to record Sunhet's own opinions. Although some people frankly disbelieve the whole process, most people are at times skeptical about the oracle, but not about Guga. They say that sometimes a *pujari* is not able to induce Guga to come., and at those times he "fakes" a performance. Most are in general agreement that this occasionally happens to the present *pujari*, whereas they all agree that it never happened to his father, the previous *pujari*. In fact they tell the story of the time when the previous *pujari* was passing a *camar's* (outcast's) house with the singing party, and the *camar* said in a scornful voice, "where has the *cheleru* gone?" (*Pujaris* of Guga are also called *chelas*, but by adding the "u" ending peculiar to low caste names, he was giving a very grave insult to the Rajput). The *pujari* became very angry and that night he went to the temple and said to Guga, "If that *camar* is not finished (dead) by tomorrow night, I will cease to worship you." The *camar* died the next day, the *Pujari* was vindicated.

Sair: Sair is a festival celebrated on the first of Asauj (Asvina) apparently associated in some way with the harvest. A barber makes the "sair" with a bamboo basket in which he puts lime, turf, green paddy blades, walnuts, and a lighted earthen lamp. In the morning he carries it from door to door where people worship it and offer coins, grains, and walnuts. Afterwards, the offerings are taken by the barber, and the sair is placed near a spring or water source (*bori*). There is often a special repast in the afternoon, and the women sing songs.

Nauratra: In this second Asauj nauratra, everything that is done in the first is repeated with greater enthusiam and preparations. On the eighth day is *Durga Ashtami* (ashtami=eight), when every one performs *pujas* in their homes as well as the temples in commemoration of the time when Durga slayed the buffalo demon Makhasur (Mahesasur). At Devi temples, there are large *melas* and thousands of villagers and pilgrims gather for the celebrations.

Desehra or Vijaya Dashmi: Dasehra ("the tenth") follows immediately after the nine days of nauratra, and this may be partially responsible for its double meaning. On the one hand this day is considered the final day of worship of Durga. At the same time, it is considered to celebrate Rama's defeat of Ravena and his two demon brothers, and all over India effigies of these enemies are burnt as the last day of celebration of the Ram Lila (the dramatic story of the Ramayana). In actuality, the second meaning tends to be celebrated in towns which are large enough to sponsor the effigy burning and the performances of the Ram Lila; whereas other places often put more emphasis on the goddess.

Karva Chauth: This festival is a fast kept by married women for the benefit of the husbands and is, according to Lewis (1958, 217) based on the story in which Parvati helped the woman Karva to bring her husband back to life. In the afternoon, the women dress in their finery as a bride and give their mother-in-law or sister-in-law some rice and bindi inside an earthen pitcher (*karva*). At night, they worship the moon through performance of *argha* with a lamp, incense, flowers, fruit, rice, vermillion, and water. After this, they breakfast with a meal.

Divali: Divali, a popular festival, derives its name from the Sanskrit *Dipali* meaning "row of lights", as its distinguishing feature is the lights which adorn every house at night. Two different

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myths, both about Vishnu, are usually offered as the rationale: the first concerns Rama's victorious return from Lanka, and the second Krsna's destruction of the demon Narkasur. However, as the festival is devoted to the worship of Luxmi (Vishnu's consort and goddess of prosperity), some mention the liberation of the King Raja Bali from a hell (*patala*) through the intervention of Luxmi. The day is characterized by general license and a great deal of gambling and drinking as well as some sexual activity carried on in quasi-religious legitimacy. Everyone cleans his house and the floors are freshly plastered with a green colored *gobar* (cow dung and mud) upon which the women draw four -cornered designs called *conks*. Boys from different villages from teams and hold a mock fight with *ghersus,* bundles of long grass tied together and lit such that they can be swung around in circles. At some point during the day many people worship the implements of their trade, whatever they may be. At night, every family performs a *puja* to Luxmi with a tray upon which *divas* (oil lamps) have been placed in such a way as to invite Luxmi into the house, which is equivalent to inviting prosperity for the coming year. Then there are fireworks and a feast.

Godhan: The festival of godhan (lit. "cow-wealth") commenorates the time when Krsna held the mountain of the world and the cattle to shelter them from Indra's rain. It is considered a holiday for the bulls and they are worshipped by putting garlands (*hars*) on them and oil on their horns (and sometimes their whole bodies). The women make representations of calves from *gobar* (cow dung). These are then enthusiastically stamped on and broken — after which they are worshipped and thrown out.

Bhai Duj: Bhai Duj ("brothers-second"), following the paradigm of Dharam Raj and his sister, is a ceremony performed between brother and sister. The sister gives her brother a vermillion *tikka* mark on the forehead and some food and sweets. In return, the brother gives her some money and some presents in the form of clothes or ornaments. This is followed by a special meal.

Panch Bhisham: This festival, which appears to have some relationship to the *Devuthani Glas* mentioned by Lewis, comes at a time when the gods are said to awaken from sleep. It is observed for the five days leading up to the full moon (*purnima*) in the month of Katak primarily by women. For these five auspicious days, they fast (or eat a restrained diet), take cold baths, and keep a lamp lit. On the last day there is often some sort of charity exercised. Regardless of whether or not the fast has been observed, most families take *khichri* (rice with lentils) on this day.

Lohri and Masrant: For lohri all the children get together in groups and go around to all the houses singing — for which they receive some wheat and corn. Like Divali, everyone plasters their house with fresh *gobar*. As a part of lohri, the masrant ceremony in honor of *agni*, the god of fire is performed. For this *puja* a pot is filled with til oil, rice, *gori dak* (a spice), *riorian* (a sweet). corn, wheat, and *ghi*. Two fires are lit: one in the hearth (*cula*) and one outside for "getting warm". *Puja* is performed to *agni* at both the fires by putting *tikkas* (vermillion marks) in front of them and pouring water near the edge. After this the contents of the pot are cooked and eaten.

Sakrant: Although most villagers are ignorant of it, Sakrant commemorates the day when the woman Kirpi conceived a son by following the advice of the Rishi Durvasa to take a bath and give curds to a Brahman. This festival, which comes on the first of Magh and marks the end of the inauspicious Poh, is celebrated by a bath which is followed by a special meal called *missi* consisting of khicheri-rice, lentils, and *ghi*.

Basant Panchami: This is a spring festival celebrated on the fifth (panchami) day of the bright half of Magh. Although in Sanskrit literature it is associated with Sarasvati, goddess of learning and the fine arts, this fact retains meaning only for professional musicians and school children who commence studying the alphabet on this day. To celebrate the advent of spring, evryone eats a yellow rice meal and dons some piece of clothing of the yellow color, whether turban, handkerchief, or shawl (perhaps as a reflection of the yellow mustard flowers which are in full bloom).

Siv Ratri: Siv Ratri ("Siva's night") commemorates Siva's marriage with Parvati and is celebrated on the fourteenth of the dark half of the moon in Phagon. Observed especially by women, it consists of a fast during the day which is devoted mainly to *pujas* to Siva as well as Deot Sidh, Gugga, and other gods. The *puja* to Siva is very elaborate with water, milk, chandon tika, 101 grains of rice, a sacred thread, *bhang* (marhijana), and many kinds of fruit. Before these articles are offered, the *lingam* and all other stone images are thoroughly washed. Some people keep vigil throughout the night with songs and recitations from the *Siv Puran katah*. It is especially auspicious to give charity on this day as well.

In addition to these widely observed ceremonies of Siv Ratri, there are a few performances of the *Rala-Rali* ceremony which appears to be unique to Kangra. This is the story it is based on as told by a village Brahman:

> Parvati did *tapas* (austerities) for eleven years to get Siva to marry her. Vishnu, desirous of this favor, found out and sent Narda to ask her to stop her austerities and marry him. But Parvati refused Narda. So Narda went to her father and told him that tince Siva was a dirty ascetic who kept snakes, etc. he should give his daughter in marriage to Vishnu. Her father agreed and tried to convince Parvati. However, Parvati was devoted to Siva, and left in a quandary she sought out her girl friend, Ganga. Ganga told her it would be a mistake to marry Vishnu because Parvati's soul would always be divided and troubled. Therefore she suggested that Parvati go into the jungle and allow herself to be eaten by the wild animals, through which she would be released from this problem. Following this advice, Parvati went to the jungle, but there she saw a light which reminded her of her unfinished devotion to Siva — so she stood on one leg for eleven more years of austerity. Siva then appeared before her and asked what she wanted. After hearing the story, Siva said he would not marry her until she was given in *dan* (religious gift) by her father. So Parnvati then made two dolls of each sex, and after marrying them, threw them in the river. Her fathers saw her doing this, and after Parvati told her her reasons, he agreed to give her to Siva,. These dolls were called Rala-Rali — and this incident means that ever since there has been the possibility of breaking off the marriage between the betrothal and the wedding.

This event is celebrated in *Rala - Rali* by the unmarried girls. They separate into two parties, the bride's and the groom's, and make two dolls of a man and a woman. After elaborately dressing both, they enact the whole marriage ceremony in considerable detail. Afterwards, the dolls are thrown in the river.

Holi: The raucous festival of Holi celebrates the day when the boy Pralad is saved from burning in the fire set by his evil father through Pralad's unwavering devotion to Ram. Beyond the recitation of this story, however, the only observance which is related to it is the setting of a bonfire. The most important aspect of the festival is the moratorium on most social taboos, very well described by Marriott (in Singer: 1966). Many people go to the towns to drink, but the most distinctive feature is the indiscriminate throwing of colored waters (non-washable) on each other as well as a number of practical jokes.

Amavas: Amavas, the last day of the dark fortnight of a lunar month is not strictly a festival, but is an auspicious day which the more devout observe by a bath and a fast. The *amavas* which occurs in the month of Asauj is particularly important. This day, called Mahalay Amavas is set aside for *sraddha*, the ceremonies performed for ancestors, and corresponds to Lewis's *Ranagat.*

D. SUPERNATURAL ACTIVITY: ILLNESS AND HEALTH

It is possible to distinguish two sources of illness on the "supernatural" level: supernatural beings, and human beings. The former usually stems by possession by *bhuts,* while the latter, called *jadu*, is caused by witches (*diani*) both male and female more usually referred to as *jadu-walas* (one who does *jadu*). It would be tempting to separate these two sources into the realms of religion and magic, however, it appears that this cannot be so easily done. Although *jadu* stems from human being's intentions and actions, it often uses the supernatural beings as agents for its harming actions. Most people refer to both in the same sentence and tend to think of them as two types of the same phenomenon.

The reasons behind a *bhut's* attack are not always clear to the victims. It is known that their attacks are moe prevalent among women and the lower castes — but by no means confined to these groups.

Sometimes a *bhut* who only recently died attacks for motives of revenge; but in most cases their evil natures are enough motivation for their attacks if given the chance. On Tuesdays and Sundays they are especially potent and any chance sight of them, generally results in at least a mild attack resulting in inability to talk or involuntary cries. Generally, it is possible to point to some provocation hoewever inadvertent which marks the victim's vulnerability to attack. Often it is enough that the *bhut* was able to touch some substance that was originally a part of the body (faces will serve for this purpose, but by far the most common is the blood of menstration).

When a *bhut* possesses a person, it (either male or female) may act in a variety of unpredictable but recognizable ways. The most common is called *cakars* (referring to "circles" in the head) and is indicated by various forms of hysteria: extreme violent behavior, or any other kind of behavior which is obviously very unnatural, such as playing with excrement, or talking in a manner only a *bhut* would. The most extreme cases might be descrived as negativistic in which the person under the control of the *bhut* refuses to eat or talk. Occasionally, the symptoms may be mostly physical, but slight irregularities in behavior indicate that it is also caused by possession.

However, not all illnesses caused by non-human agencies are attributable to malevolent *bhuts*. Occasionally, to draw worship to himself, or for some other reason, a god will cause certain kinds of illnesses and even possession. This is illustrated by the following two cases, the first of which will be discussed more extensively later:

> Amar Singh of a village seven miles from Sunhet was, from boyhood, an ardent devotee (*bhagat*) of Baba Deot Sidh. He married a woman from Hosahirpur District and when following the *maklaua* she came to his bed, he was paralyzed from the waist down. He remained like this for ten days until he told her to worship the Babaji. When she did, his legs were restored. (Note: this was told to me by him even in his wife's presence.)
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> M. S.'s *nu* (son's wife) was so ill that for a year and a half she was barely able to eat enough to stay alive. As *jadu* was suspected a *cela* was called. He informed them that Baba Deot Sidh was demanding her worship. So she went to his temple, and upon arriveing there was able to eat four *rotis* (breads) even before *puja*.

The symptoms exhibited by victims of *jadu* can be the same as the ones caused by *bhuts*, but are often more specific: pains in different parts of the body, vomitting, lack of appetite, bad appearance, paralysis, and various diseases. It is said that some *iadu-walas* even have the power of killing people from a distance, but is considered to be growing rarer now-a-days. *Juda-walas* use a variety of means to accomplish their nefarious deeds, most of which involve the knowledge of short powerful *mantras* (spoken formulas). The following are two examples of the ways in which *juda* is accomplished: (1) A concoction is prepared containing some owl's meat, eagle's meat, bat's meat, spider's web, and ashes from a cremation which are cooked together while the secret mantras are recited. A little bit of this is then given in secret to the victim. (2) In the bottom part of a broken earthen pot is placed an oil lamp, a written *mantra* containing the victim's name, and a pin. With the pappropriate *mantras*, the pin flies to the victim and inflicts great pain. As a variation, the bottom part of the pot is filled with water and the night sky is watched in its reflection until a falling star is seen. When that happens, a lemon is pierced with a porcupine quill, the *mantras* are said, and the person dies.

A *jadu-wala* is thought to acquire his skills either through a mentor or by direct contact with *bhuts*. The high castes state it is only fund among the low castes, because "it is a dirty thing —

those of them that want power go about learning it." It is rumored that a *jula* (weaver caste) boy in the village has picked up a certain amount of it. The story is told of the *dumne* (bamboo working caste) who purposefully went about acquiring *jadu*. He accomplished this by going out on the cauth (fourth) before the festival of Divali (a day known for its inauspiciousness) to a place where *bhuts* congregate alongside of the river about six miles from Sunhet. Here he waited until the night when he saw a whole marriage party of *bhuts* going by. He mingled with the, guests, watching closely what they did and said — and from this he learned enough to do strong *jadu*.

Public accusations of *jadu-walas* is rare, even though people are more inclined to believe in their existence than in bhuts. Except for the few low caste people who are suspected of it, most suspicions about people with these sorts of powers rest on people from other areas— especially the Gadis of Chamba, and the refugee Tibetan Lamas. The following is a story of a Gadan (female Gaddi) witch:

> An old man from a village near Sunhet told of a friend of his who was up in the mountains near a Gaddi camp, who was wearing a new four-pound wool shawl he was very proud of. He felt like smoking his *hokah* (water pipe). but as he had no coals for it he went to the Gaddi camp and asked a Gadan there to bring him some. She went to the fire and picked up two handfuls of coals in her bare hands and brought them back. The friend realizing that this was a woman with jadu quickly slipped off his new shawl, folded it and held it out for her to put them in so that she could not give them directly to him (as he knew that this would cause his death). The coals burned through his shawl and fell through, but by this time he was on his way, and although he was happy that he had saved his life, he was chagrined at the loss of his new shawl.

For illness caused by *bhuts* or *jadu* there are two types of healers: chelas and *Vaids* (*Aryurvedic* practicioners). In addition to these there are homeopathic and "heleopathic" (the term used to describe the mainstream of Western medicine) medical practicioners — but it is very infrequent that these are consulted in this type of illness. In their cures, both the *chela* and the *Vaid* make use of certain specially prepared herbs and *jantar-mantar* 'charms and spells) but the *chela* alone conducts exorcisms and deals directly with *bhuts*.

The word *chela* (S., H. disciple) apparently is derived from the fact that every *chela* is a particular god's disciple. This god is the soure of his power and vision. Although he may learn many of his skills from other *chelas*, he himself does not become a *chela* until he has established a relationship with a particular deity. The deities most commonly forming this relationship are *Paharia, Sindu*, (these two are described previously) *Narsing, Gada,* and *Palia*— all of the third category and, in contrast to surrounding areas, all male. A potential *chela* establishes this relationship by the following procedure. He must go to some spot appropriate to the deity, such as beneath a *pipal* tree or at a water source, for twenty-one nights. Each night he must repeat the appropriate *mantra* one hundred and one times with an offering of prepared food, including meats and liquors. The spirit will come on the twenty-first night and inquire what the man desires. He should answer that he wishes the spirit to come whenever he is bidden by the *mantra* and do his bidding — which the spirit generally consents to. The following is the *mantra* used to summon *Sindu Baba* presented in the *Kangra Gazetteer*. Another example of a *mantra* used for *Paharia* from my own data is given in an appendix together with a rough translation.

> Parbat gupha ot base bap tera; Sindu Bir tun hain bhai mera; Ugarbir ka potra; Chetarpal ka potra; Lohpal ka potra; Agnipal ka potra; Sangulpal ka potra; Thikarpal ka potra; Bhuinpal ka dohtra; Mata Kunthardi ka jaya; Puniya ka bhai; Guran ka sikh; hamara saddia ave; hamara beja ave; harama kan shitab kar ave; Guru ke shakat hamari bhagat. Phure mantar; chale bacha; Mahandeo ka bacha phure.
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> translation: Your father dwells in the shade of the mountain valley; Sendu Bir, you are my brother. Grandson of Ugabir, grandson of Chetrpal, grandson of Lohpal, grandson of Sangulpal; grandson of Thikarpal, grandson (daughter's son) of Bhuinpal; son of Mother Kunthardi, brother of Puniya; disciple of the Guru, come at my call, come for my sending, come quickly and do my bidding, I worship the power of the Guru. Work a *mantra*, go voice, let the voice of Mahadeo (Siva) work.

In accord with the patterns of shamanic initiations discerned by Eliade (1951), most *chelas* are also able to point to esoteric experiences and teachings in addition to their special relationship to tutelary deities. Among the three chelas I was able to talk with, this generally consisted of a period of apprenticeship "way back in the mountains". The example of Kushi Ram, Sunhet's chela, is one illustration.

> At the age of 12 Kushi ran away from home to become a sadhu. He wandered around in the mountains and finally found a guru in Lahaul (a Buddhist area). It was here that his family finally found him and tried to persuade him to come home. But he refused to leave and they had to pretend to relent. During the night when he was sleeping, they tied him up and brought him forcibly with them until he finally agreed to come of his own accord. When he came back, he allowed his parents to marry him, and accepted his previous position in society as a Rajput agriculturalist. However, following in his father's footsteps he used the powers and knowledge he gained from his Guru to become a chela, and established a relationship with *Paharia Baba*.

The chela uses a variety of cures depending on the nature of the case and its causes. If the victim has been attacked by a *bhut* which can be made to talk, then the diagnosis is made by the *bhut* itself by forcing it to identify itself. However, if no *bhut* presents itself, the *chela* must call on his own deity through his *mantra*, and inquire from it whether the patient is the victim of *jadu* or a *bhut*, and if a *bhut* which *bhut*. In the past and in the more remote hill areas this is done by calling on the deity to possess the shaman — but now-a-days in Kangra the *chela* merely consults his deity "in his mind."

A victim of *jadu* is treated with medicines and *mantras*. Depending on the type of jadu, various fruits and herbs extracted from the following plants are mixed with water and given to the patient: *nirvisi butu, bandri-bangalon buti, nar mada, gugi ban, kagar vail buti,* and others. Additionally, the *chela* may extract the *jadu* by laying his hands on the place in the body where it is located, rubbing his hands together, and then blowing on them.

Bhuts are mainly dealt with trough confrontation and exorcism, although various physical remedies are occasionally used such as certain herbs, oil rubbed on the head, the smoke of herbs of cow dung blown in the face, or even beating (as it is felt that only the *bhut* is hurt, not the person). In exorcisms, the *chela* holds conversations with the *bhut*, demanding to know the *bhut's* identity and the reasons for its attack. Then, calling upon powerful *mantras* and his tutelary deity, the *chela* demands, pleads, and cajoles the *bhut* to leave the person. Often various offerings have to be given before the *bhut* will consent to leave — both as a placation to the *bhut* and as a source of more power to the shaman. Although no theoretical analysis of this process in therapeutic terms is presented here, it is important to note that the period of confrontation is usually long and animated, and that whatever the *bhut* says through the victim's mouth is never considered to reflect on the person himself.

A few brief case histories will demonstrate the principles of this sort of illness and healing more clearly.

> While P. C. was just a *sepoy* (private) in the army, he came home on leave and suddenly had a fit in which he started to violently attack people in the village. Kushi Ram, the chela, was called in. He recited the *Ma Bir Mantra* (found in the appendix), blew on his hand, and was forced to offer four pounds of ghi in a *havan* religious fire) before the ghost would leave. About three months later while P. C. was away at his platoon, the same thing happened. There they called a Brahman Pandit, but when the men released him so that he could be treated, he started to gnaw on the Pundit's arm. The Pundit was unable to cure him and he had to be sent back to his village where Kushi was again called. This time Kushi was able to make the *bhut* talk and found out that he had been sent by another known person, and that he refused to leave P.C. So this time, using the same means as before, it was not until Kushi had offered thirty pounds of *ghi* (worth over a month of P. C.'s salary) before the *bhut* would leave. P. C. has been fine ever since.
>
> Five years ago in a village above Talwara (twenty miles from Sunhet) a young woman was attacked such that she could not eat or drink, and would repeatedly rub her genitals. Various chelas were called in who were able to identify the bhut as a *masan* (a male bhut who escaped before being fully cremated) but who were unable to make the *bhut* talk or make him leave more than temporary periods, during which the woman was able to eat and drink enough to remain alive. But as the *bhut* kept returning and various *chelas*

> were tried without success, Kushi Ram was finally called in. He tried his usual methods of *mantras*, etc. but also was unable to get the *bhut* to respond. So he took her husband, and her elder brother down to where a cremation was finishing (almost all of the poeple had left). Here he had the woman stripped (an impossibility to imagine in puritanical Kangra society), laid a small white cloth over her, and the four of them sat down facing the cremation. Then the *chela* proceeded to make various offerings to the cremation pyre such as *ghi* and *jo* (barley)—reciting *mantras* all the time. After several hours of this very elaborate offering, he called the person assigned to bring the goat that was to be sacrificed. Just as this man raised his axe to kill the goat he, the husband, and the brother were all attacked by fits which left them shaking but immobile. Kushi, however, was still all right. He took the axe from the man and killed the goat, dividing it into four parts. He threw the first part (containing the head) into the pyre and commanded the woman to go. The woman was suddenly released, and, becoming aware of her nakedness, grew somewhat upset until some clothes were wrapped around her. As soon as she was clothed, Kushi sacrificed each of the remaining parts of the goat, commanding each man in turn to be left alone, which they were. Kushi states that the woman is now fine and has a number of children.

This story is particularly revealing. It shows that the *bhut* is manipulated through confronting it with superior "sacred power", that is, power originating from the religious realm. In most cases the chela derives and wields this power through his *mantras* and his tutelary deity. In difficult cases, though, as we have seen, this power becomes insufficient in itself, and the *chela* is forced to strengthen "his side" by offerings and sacrifices. In this, the *shaman* is utilizing a principle of major importance in Hinduism, and one which is in evidence throughout the whole Sanskritic tradition — that through sacrifices, offerings, or austerities, a person is able to gain control (power over) another being. That is, that the sacrifices, offerings, etc. generate power in themeselves. One need only note that it is through this principle that the gods of Sanskrit mythology often find themselves in trouble (by having been forced to give a boon, usually of immortality, to some being who did so many austerities that the god was "compelled") to confirm this notion.

This principle of power is the sructural premise upon which the specific logic of this case is intelligible as well as therapeutically workable. (Presumably the only way for the women and the men to participate in this "psychodrama" in the way that they evidently did would be if they shared an understanding of the mechanics of the exorcizing process.) Since all concerned knew that the *bhut* was a *masan*, i. e. one who had not been fully cremated, it is clear that the only way to get it to leave for good was to force it back into the pyre where the cremation process could be completed. The *bhut's* sudden attack on the other men, then, was its last desperate effort to avert his coercion into the pyre which would necessarily occur when the goat was sacrificed as the power of this last offering would be too much for it. Since Kushi was through his own special powers immune to this attack, he was able to carry out the sacrifice anyway, and effect the cure.*

The case of Amar Singh (mentioned before) illustrates an interesting extension of the same process. Amar Singh, who remains as yet uncured, started to exhibit the symptoms of an attack by a *bhut* two years back. However, after consulting a large number of *chelas* who identified the *bhut* as one named *daga*, he retained the same hysterical symptoms. So as a last resort, the parents sent him to the city of Amritsar for *bijli* ("electricity" — shock treatment), hoping that this new source of power used by the government doctors would be able to force the *bhut* to leave if that was the problem. But after six months of treatment, Amar Singh was not cured, and his parents have lost their faith in *bijli* as a substitute for *mantras* and offerings. But what is important to note is the manner in which they were prepared to understand the curative properties of electricity — a manner which merely utilized the same structural principles.

In constrast to the *chelas*, *Vaids* utilize only *mantras* and medicines. Although some of them do take on cases of suspected *jadu* or *bhut* possession, there is a growing hesitancy among them to associate themselves with this type of healing. Increasingly, they are more concerned to maintain their positions in the face of competition with heleopathic (and to a lesser extent, homeopathic and Unani, or "Greek") medical practioioners, and are thus slowly turning from *mantras* to antibiotics.

OTHER "SUPERNATURAL" FACTORS.

Astrology: It has been indicated in the foregoing discussions that astrology, especially the astrological determinations of auspicious and inauspicious times underlies much of Kangra Hindusim, especially the festival cycle. Not discussed as yet, but perhaps of more importance is its role in determining the horoscopes of potential marital partners and the timing of the *samskaras* — not only as to the day, but as to the hour of each ritual within them. To deal with this aspect, every Brahman purohit carries with him a copy of the *Jantri*, the book which is published every year showing the astrological situation for every hour of the year. Some of the more conservative Rajputs and Brahmans carry this astrological determination one step further by consulting the *Jantri* or other reference book whenever they go on a journey or start any undertaking.

For these purposes, the detrmination of *samskaras* and undertakings, a system of *murats* is used. There are four *murats* which occur in irregular alternation according to astrological determinants, in cycles of six months.

1) *Sunn — maranam dadam*(("will die"), no new enterprise should be undertaken.
2) *Bakar — gati balambihat* ("in going will be late"), the undertaking will be delayed.
3) *Amrit — karaj sobana* ("work good"), a good *murat*.
4) *Mohindar — bajaiyang* ("will be done"), the best time for starting anything.

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* Kushi's genius as a chela was in creating the situation and manipulating it in such a forceful, yet intelligible way. A case for the psychological plausibity of the other men's "attacks" can be made by noting that they had lived with the woman for the last two years of her attack, and understanding the compelling logic of Kushi's actions, they were very much aware of the bhut's (the woman's) resistance, and were indeed a part of it.

Each *murat* occurs in multiples of twenty-four minutes, or *garis*. Thus there are thirty *garis* in every twelve-hour period from six to six. Typically, the length of a murat is from three to six *garis*, before another *murat* occurs.

Occasionally it happens that a person must begin a journey (i. e. catch a bus) during a bad *murat*. In order to escape the consequences of this, it is possible for him to leave out a *prasthan* the night before. A *prasthan* consists of some *gur* (molasses), *dhanya* (a spice), and money tied in a handkerchief. This is then placed at the furthest boundary of where the person will be working, or buried near the road that he will be taking. (Crooke, 1895: I., 230)

Chaura: The concept of *chaura* (derived from *chai* meaning "shadow") concerns situations when the "shadow" of one person "falls" on another causing harm (not pollution as in the case of an outcast shadow). The quotations are used to indicte that in two of the cases, it is not important whether any shadow exists, but rather if it is a possibility that one's shadow could fall on the other — that is, sight. *Chaura* can occur in three cases:

(1) If two women have children within the same month, then these women cannot see each other for six months. If the shadow of one falls either on the mother or the child of the other, then that child will die, literally, *baccha sukjanda* ("his blood dries up"). If this hasn't occured, then after six months the women stand on different sides of an upturned bed and give each other *gur* (molasses), dry dhaniya (a spice), and *ghi*. Then they embrace and there is no longer any chance of *chaura*. (2) If a pregnant woman happens to be near where a dead body is being taken for cremation, the same *chaura* occurs, and the woman's child dies. (3) If two marriage parties pass each other such that the bridegrooms see each other, then they will become sterile. This instance is discussed more fully in the *samskaras*. It is clear that in these three instances, *chaura* refers to the means in which the harming effect takes place, and not the effect itself. To understand why these effects should take place in these situations it is necessary to understand the meaning of its elements, i.e. two grooms, a pregnant woman and a dead body, etc. As these situations occur within larger situations, they can be understood only when we examine these contexts which give these situations special meaning.

Bad-i-nazar: A related but distinctly different phenomenon, is the action of the evil eye, or the *bad-i-nazar*. This occurs whenever a child or material object is subject to too strong envious looks. Thus if when a child is drinking milk from his mother he is the recipient of envious looks from another child or mother, he is liable to die. To avert this evil eye, then, a strong black coloring is smeared over children's eyes and black handprints are made on the wall of houses, the theory being that the potential envious gaze will be drawn by the imperfections of these marks. For similar reasons, a child's beauty is never praised strongly, and a child is often called by a name referring to his ugliness.

Omens: Although there are a large number of different omens encountered everywhere in North India, it is perhaps surprising how consistent their meanings are. Many omens concern the start of a journey or undertaking, but the more important ones occur in dreams. Some examples of the former are:

1) If you encounter an empty water vessel you are not likely to succeed; whereas a full one indicates success.

2) Sneezing immediately before starting something is bad luck.
3) If a snake passes in front of you, it is bad luck.
4) Twitching of the right eye means bad luck; twitching of the left eye means good luck.
5) Itching of the right hand means you will receive something; itching of the left hand means you will give something.

In dreams, the following subjects each have specific meanings:

1) snake—something bad impending
2) motor car—someone is going to die (i.e. going away)
3) a dead man who is actually alive – that person will live for a long time yet.
4) a man who talks but is actually already dead – he has become a *devta*, which is a good sign for the dreamer
5) a sick man—that man, or another who is sick will soon get well.
6) an attacking cow—an ill omen
7) wedding of two people—if unmarried these people should not get married, if already married something will happen to them
8) receiving money – your own fortune will go away
9) a *devta*—a good omen, whatever it says will come true
10) a *bhut*—very bad omen
11) another's wife—means you want her

It is difficult to discern a systematic basis upon which the meanings of omens and dream symbols are detrmined. But it is interesting to note that many of the principles of psychoanalysis are used in the "interpretations" : (a) substitution (motor car dream, sick man dream) (b) reversal and opposite meanings (in receiving money dream, dead man dream), (c) wish fulfillment (another's wife). In addition, direct revelation from supernatural sources is not discounted.

E. ATTITUDES AND CHANGE

Kolenda (1964), following Carstairs (1967) and Lewis (1958), has taken the questionnaire/interview approach of sociology to demonstrate the degree of ignorance of, and, in some instances, disbelief in the basic Hindu concepts of *karma, moksa,* etc. Although my own more informal investigations failed to find Rajputs who were not to some degree conversant with these ideas (indeed, most people had a high degree of fluency with them), it is true that some villagers were not particularly concerned with all the implications of these ideas and a few registered some doubt as to their veracity. However, as important as these considerations are for understanding the modern Hindu, they do not, as this study has been contending, warrant the conclusion these authors arrive at that these sanskritic conceptions are thus irrelevant to village Hinduism. Conversely, as will be discussed more fully later, these conceptions are the only foundation upon which many of the more local myths, deities, and rituals make sense and are intelligible.

Disbelief, however, plays a more important role in our understanding of Kangra religion when it is set in relation to the pantheon. In fact, it is in relation to the lower end of the pantheon rather than in relation to sanskritic concepts, that there appears to be the most doubt in evidence. Some of the more educated members of Sunhet (which usually but not always corresponded to younger age groups) expressed disbelief in the existence of *bhuts* and *devtas*, and occasionally, even the *devas*. Although these statements were often contradicted by other statements by the same people taking the existence of these beings for granted, the prevelance of a certain amount of doubt is widespread enough (among the men if not the women) to make it significant.

In examining the specific explanations substituted for traditional belief in these supernatural beings and their interaction with men (such as *bhut* possession or encounters, or the miraculous receipt of a new tongue in the place of a sacrificed one) one is presented with statements which appear to be based on a surprisingly sophisticated psychology. For example, one older man said that *bhuts* did not exist in reality, they exist in the mind. And because they are so real in the mind a person who is possessed by one or sees one thinks it is a real *bhut*. Another young man, speaking of miraculous events attributed to the *Chintpurni Devi* stated that although the Devi did not do them they did in fact happen. This interpretation he rested in the explanation that faith is a very powerful thing and is able to accomplish things which the ordinary man finds difficult to believe, and so attributes to a god. In addition to these examples, which could be easily multiplied, there is, as was indicated by the story of the moon-landing, a few which from a primarily secular point of view register just a plain skepticism which offers no explanations.

The fact that so many explanations, though, gave credence to the event in question and its overpowering psychological reality points up one of the distinctive characteristics of Hinduism. This is that religious truth is understood differently by different levels of consciousness without invalidating the truth of those different conceptions. Many Indian Gurus have proclaimed that there is only one Reality (Brahman) which underlies all of existence and that all life appears to man in the form of illusion (*maya*), that is, phenomenal reality which creates in man illusory understandings. However, even these Gurus do not deny that in order to represent this as truthfully as possible within the limited conditions of *maya*, gods in anthropomorphic form are necessary for the kind of understanding the common man is capable of applying. In this sense, these gods exist as manifestations of Brahman, as tangible ways of dealing with religious forces in *samsara*. The common villager is not deluded when he believes in the existence of *devas* and *devtas*, his understanding is merely on a lower level and of a limited kind. Thus, when the Sunhet villagers expressed disbelief in the existence of certain supernatural beings in the way they did, they were not expressing disbelief in Hinduism, but merely expressing their belief on a more sanskritic level.* Additionally, this may help to explain why some of the people who express disbelief in certain members of the pantheon, do not feel that they are acting in contradiction to this belief in carrying out *pujas*, and if necessary, calling in a *chela* to exorcise a *bhut*.

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* Needless to say, certain reformative sects in modern Hinduism have taken a more exclusive view and denounced certain beliefs and practices as superstitions. It is not within the scope of this study to deal with these different sects and show how most of them, to my mind, still express the basic structures of Hinduism. But as the sect of Radha Soamis is strong throughout the Punjab and Kangra and has a number of adherents in Sunhet, I have devoted a discussion of this sect and its relation to the traditional village religion in the last chapter.

CHAPTER III

SAMSKARAS — LIFE CYCLE RITUALS

On the theoretical level, the Hindu understanding of the course of normal human life is based on stages called *asramas*. There are four asramas: *brahmacarya* (celibate student), *garhasthya* (householder, *vanaprastha* (forest dweller), and *sanyasa* (wandering ascetic). These stages, however, exist as an ideal, a model for human life rather than a description of it — for although it is not unknown, it is very rare that a man follows this course.

Theoretically corresponding to the *asramas* are the *samskaras* or life cycle rituals, ceremonies marking the transition from one stage to another, as well as rituals dealing with lesser transitions within a stage. The sixteen generally agreed on ceremonies to serve this purpose as set out in literary sources (there is some inconsistency in the list) ignore the last two *asramas*, and terminate with the cremation of a householder. Additionally, the *samskaras* actually performed are usually a limited selection from this list, as well as frequently differing in content although not form. This suggests that the *samskaras,* as they are found in literature, are also a model, an ideal which coincides in reality neither with the *asramas* or with actual practice.

However, as models these two theoretical schemes of human life are extremely important in revealing the meaning of the *samskaras* that *are* practiced in specific areas such as Kangra. Victor Turner has written that ritual

> creates, or recreates, the categories through which men perceive reality — the axioms underlying the structure of society and the laws of the natural and moral orders. It is not here a case of life being an imitation of art, but of social life being an attempted imitation of models portrayed and animated by ritual. (Turner : 1968, 7)

The *asramas* and the ideal list of *samskaras* are models of the kind to which Turner is referring here. The *samskaras* that are performed do, as will be seen, imitate and invoke these ideals.

Furthermore, as ideal forms of an individual's life which serve to justify and illucidate the *samskara* rituals, these models can be understood as kinds of myths. That is, they share the characteristics of myths (as is more fully discussed in Chapter IV) of expressing the basic structural conflicts and contradictions in the culture as well as a kind of "solution" to those problems. And inasmuch as these particular "myths" are recreated through the *samskara* rituals, it becomes clear that the rituals pose, and are expressions of, these same structural contradictions and relations. Thus, the incongruence of the models and the rituals far from being an inconsistency (or as some scholars have argued, a separation) between sanskritic and the popular traditions, can be found to be consistent on the structural level — and the incongruence itself of importance in understanding their inter-relation.

Ritual, however, is not one-dimensional — like myth which exists only in words. Ritual is a sequence of actions (a drama) in which various designated actors utilize predetermined objects and words within a certain setting (time and place) to accomplish certain purposes. In Turner's words,

> any type of ritual forms a system of great complexity, having a symbolic structure, a value structure, a telic structure, and a role structure. (Turner: 1968, 4)

It is an important chatacteristic of ritual that while these structures may be meaningful within each ritual, or the wider system of rituals in which individual rituals may only constitute a part (indeed, it has been my premise that the religious symbolic structure is a self-referential system), they also have connections with and become intelligible through non-ritual aspects of a culture. Thus, one must often look to social, kinship, economic, etc. relationships and values outside the ritual system to understand these aspects of the rituals. An understanding of the ritual must necessarily be multi-dismensional — couched in the terms of these different realms — in order to avoid severe distortions.

The purpose (*telos*) of most of the *samskaras* is to accomplish a transition from one state to another. That is, they are in van Gennep's terms "rites of passage" and the more important of them (such as marriage and death) exhibit the characteristics of sepraration, transition, and aggregation which van Gennep identified in rites of passage. (van Gennep: 1960). Furthermore, most of them invoke various divine examples and can be considered in Eliade's terms to be in one sense paradigmatic reenactments of these examples often occurring in places which have been sacralized and in a non-ordinary time scheme.

However, what is of importance here is exactly how the transition is accomplished—what symbolic structure it reveals and what kind of social and economic relationships are involved. To this end, the *samskara* rituals must be approached in different units. Not only must each *samskara* be viewed as a whole; but each ritual within *samskaras* which are composed of more than one ritual, and the entire ritual system of the *samskaras* themselves must be understood in its own terms. If this task were attempted with a view towards completeness it would be vast, to say the least. Thus this study has slighted the *saṁskaras* of lesser importance and the social and economic aspects in an attempt to gain a more in depth understanding of some symbolic aspects.

Since *samskaras* are rites of transition which in part serve to ease individuals from one role to another, socially and psychologically, it is regretted that I have neither the data nor theoretical tools to examine the subjective feelings and psychological changes occurring in the individuals who were involved in these rituals. As some parts of the rituals are conducted in Sanskrit, a language unintelligible to most villagers, it may be questioned to what degree some of the ritual is meaningful. This is a legitimate question, but one I am unable to deal with authoritatively. Nevertheless, it has been my assumption (and one which I see no reason to reject) that the symbolic structure which the anthropologist may be able to construct through examining all the symbols, references, and associations is, to some degree unconsciously, meaningful to the particippants. This is in part validated by the repetitive nature of the ritual system. For, as Turner states,

> The (ritual) system as a whole is full of repetitions, precisely because it contains images and meanings and models for behaviour which constitute the cognitive and ethical landmarks of the culture. (Turner: 1968,5)

THE SAMSKARAS: THEORETICAL AND ACTUAL

As marriage is without doubt the central and most important *samskara* on both the theoretical and actual level, and contains as many rituals as the rest put together, I have divided the samskaras into those which come before marriage, at marriage, and at death, the second most elaborated *samskara*. This division is also necessary in that many of the *samskaras* which theoretically come before marriage (and for the Kangra Brahmans do) have been incorporated into the marriage ceremonies of the Kangra Rajputs. I have included short accounts of these theoretical (or non-practiced) rituals separately so that the two systems can be seen comparatively. The following table illustrates the difference between the "model" as presented by Pandey (1969) and the "actual".

Model Samskaras	**Practiced Samskaras**
1. *Garbhadhanu* (conception)	
2. *Pumsavana* (2nd-3rd month pregnancy)	
3. *Simantonnayana* (8th month pregnancy)	*Rit*—(occasionally) (7th-8th month pregnancy)
4. *Jatakarma* (birth)	*Janam* (birth)
5. *Namakarana* (name giving)	*Nam Den* (name giving)
6. *Niskarmana* (first outing)	
7. *Annaprasana* (weaning)	(*Annaprasana* — occasionally)
8. *Chudakarana* (Tonsure)	*Mundan* (Tonsure)
9. *Karnavedha* (ear piercing)	(non-ritual ear-piercing of girls)
10. *Vidyarambha* (learning alphabet)	
11. *Upanayana* (sacred thread)	(*Janeo*—during marriage) (sacred thread)

12. *Vedarambha* (learning Vedas)	
13. *Kesanta* (cutting beard)	
14. *Samavartana* (end discipleship)	(in condensed form — during marriage)
15. *Vivaha* (marriage)	*Biah* (marriage)
16. *Antyesti* (death)	(no inclusive name) (death)

Historically, it is clear that many elements in the *samskaras* are very old. Pandey (1969) and Sengupta (1965) have traced some of the marriage rites back to the *Vedas* and *Aranyakas*. However, it is not until the *Grhyasutras* (over 2,000 years ago) that we come across detailed accounts of *samskaras* which are still practiced today. It appears that at this time the life-cycle *samskaras* were not distinguished as a group from other sacrificial rites, and many of them are described as *yagnas* (sacrifices). Aside from incidental accounts in the *Dharmasutras*, *Smrtis*, *Epics*, *Puranas*, etc. it is not until the relatively recent *Paddhatis* that the *samskaras* are elaborated in their present official forms. These *Paddhatis* have in turn been copied and summarized in local publications used by the Brahman *purohits* in performing their functions, and are thus available and known by a considerable number of the population — even though most *purohits* have to modify the official lists in order to apply it to practiced ceremonies.

A. The Samaskaras: Conception to Marriage

(1) *Garbhadhana* (S)—not practiced (?)

If this samskara is taken in its historical sense to mean the act of conceiving (intercourse) performed within a ritual context of spoken prayers, then it can be said to be not performed to-day (a view taken by Pandey: 1969, 49). However, it is more than likely that *Garbhadhana* refers primarily to the act of intercourse which results in conception, whether or not specifically religious symbols are invoked. Literally, Garbhadana means the "bestowing" or "placing of the embryo". It derives from the traditional Indian notion that "In the male indeed grows the seed that is poured along into the woman". (*Ayur Veda*, Pandey: 1969, 49). That is, that the semen contains the seeds which in intercourse are deposited in the woman's womb. This is a polluting act, and it is of utmost importance that several days have elapsed since the intensely polluting period of menstration. It may be supposed that it was in part to mitigate these conditions and insure conception that texts recommended the recitation of scripture. If conception could be insured, then only a minimum amount of semen would be lost — a consideration that is still of utmost importance. The underlying premise is that semen is the source of a person's strength, and that the more he retains, the stronger he is. In fact, certain yogic schools concentrate in exercises designed to raise the semen up through a central channel in the body (*nala*) through various levels (*cakra*) to the head — a notion which will be clarified later on. At this point it is sufficient to note that Carstairs also found these ideas fundamental to his informants in Rajasthan:

> Celibacy was the first requirement of true fitness, because every sexual orgasm meant the loss of a quantity of semen, laboriously formed. (Carstairs: 1967, 84) (for in a man's semen) resides his strength. Everyone knew that semen was not easily formed; it takes forty days, and forty drops of blood, to make one drop of semen. (Carstairs: 1967, 83)

Thus, although it is questionable how much this *samskara* is of importance as the first life-cycle rite of an individual in any more than the sense of the logical beginning, it is clear that it deals with an event which has strong religious implications which I hope to clarify later.

(2) *Pumsavana* (S)—not practiced

It is somewhat unclear what was intended by this *samskara* of the third month of pregnancy or what relation it might bear to the various pregnancy rites reported for some other areas in North India, although not in Sunhet. Pandey states that it is a rite "for the quickening of a male child" and that various Vedic verses should be recited which call for the birth of a male. Additionally, juice from banyan tree sprouts or other herbs, should be inserted in the woman's right nostrial and to insure the son's virility, the husband should place a dish of water on the mother's lap. It may be noted in connection with the right nostril that the concept or rightness generally refers to purity and auspiciousness, as the left hand is used for sanitary purposes.

(3) *Simantonnayana* (S) *rit* or *thankni* (Pn)—occasionally practiced

The *Simantonnayana* or "parting of the hair" is generally prescribed in the literary sources for the eighth month of pregnancy. Similar ceremonies called *rit* or *thankni* are performed in Kangra and the Punjab upon occasion. The ritual parting of the expectant mother's hair which forms the central action of this *samskara* also occurs in the *Sirgandi* ritual of the marriage ceremonies.

The ancient Indian commentators, of a prolific exegetical bent, gave various different interpretations of this *samskara*. One interpretation is that it is performed to ward off the "evil demons bent on sucking the blood" who "come to women in first pregnancy to devour the fetus"—interpretation based on the still current notion that the hair is a mode of access for *bhuts* and evil spirits. A later reference in the *Brahmanas* places the emphasis on prosperity and fertility, rather than protection :

> As Prajapati establishes the boundary of Aditi for great prosperity, so I part the hair of this woman and make her progeny live to an old age. This (Udumbara) tree is fertile. Let it be fruitful (Pandey: 1969, 65)

The word boundary is in Sanskrit *sima*, and the word for hair-part is merely its extension, *simanta*. The metaphor refers to the parting of Aditi, the earth, to make it prosperous, and suggests the same fertility motif illustrated in the reference to the Udumbara tree. This is more explicit in a later version of the ritual which was performed under a male constellation:

> After parting of hair the husband tied the Udumbara branch round the neck of the wife with a string of three twisted threads with the words, "Rich in sap is this tree; like the tree rich in sap, be thou fruitful." (Pandey: 1969, 66)

It is clear that the central relation here joins the terms "parting the hair" to "the tree bearing fruit" and that this relation is precisely what occurs in birth when the genital hair is parted by the birth of the child. The relation between these symbolic actions remains the same.

This interpretation that the ritual's primary purpose is to facilitate birth, and thus fertility, is strengthened by the fact that most sources agree that it should only be performed for the first pregnancy when anxiety is certainly highest and the fertility of the woman (her ability to bear children) in question.

This *samskara* as it is occasionally performed in Kangra and the Punjab is structurally the same, although since it is done without the presence of a Brahman is lacking the Sanskrit verses. The usual procedure is that after the woman's hair has been parted (in the presence of the husband) various different fruits and grains which have been given by the mother's family — a fact which will assume more importance later – are then placed in the woman's lap. Generally, these items are composed of dates, coconuts, and rice grains. Here it is evident that a similar relation holds of hair-parting to fruits of the earth.

It must be remembered, however, that this purpose in no way mitigates its importance in providing protection from *bhuts*. For pregnancy and childbirth are without doubt the most polluting and vulnerable times to danger from this quarter. As symbols are able to have many referents, so a ritual is able to deal with more than one aspect of a "problem" at a time.

(4) *Jatakarma* (S); the ceremonies of birth (*janam*)

In the *Atharya Veda* (I, II) there is a passage that was to be recited at the time of birth to facilitate delivery :

> Four are the directions of the sky, four also of the earth; the gods sent together the fetus; let them unclose her (the woman) in order to give birth. Let Pusan unclose her; we make the Yoni go apart; do thou Susana loosen; do thou Vickala, let go. Not as it were stuck in the flesh, not in the fat, not as it were in the marrow, let the spotted slimy afterbirth come down for the dog to eat; let the afterbirth descend, etc. (Pandey: 1969, 71)

Now-a-days, however, except in times of difficult delivery when a *Vaid* or *chela* is called to give medicine, the delivery is accomplished by the midwife (*dai*) without calling in *purohits*. If it is the woman's first child, and sometimes subsequently, the woman usually has returned to her family's home for the birth. The birth itself usually takes places with the woman placed on the ground rather than on a bed (which is also the case for dying). A fire is lit in the room, water is placed in a container, and some wheat or rice grain is either placed in the fire or laid on another plate. Finally, some member of the family is stationed to note the exact moment of birth—presently accomplished by watches but formerly by the position of the stars, sun, etc.

Following birth, the child is washed. After a suitable length of time, the mother's breasts are also washed with water and *drub* grass prior to suckling. The afterbirth is buried.

For thirteen days, both the mother and the child are in a period of impurity called *sutak* or *chut* (S.=*asauca*). During this period the woman remains within the same room and is served by female members of the family or the *nain* (barber's wife). Literary sources record various rites in which the husband blows his breath into the child and recites various verses to insure the child's long life, etc. These rites are not performed in Kangra, and there is no contact between the male members of the family and the mother and child which might result in pollution. The mother's pollution, therefore, is prevented from spreading to male members of the family or other relations.

On the eighth day after birth, the *kul purohits* or a substitute Brahman Pandit is called in to make the horoscopes and give the child its official name.

(5) *Namakarana.*

The process of determining the horoscope is called *ras-gina*, or "counting the *rasis*" (*rastras* — the various houses through which the constellations move), and the resulting horoscope is called the *janmpuri*. From an individual's *janmpuri,* the Brahman gives the child a name which often contains the appropriate constellation, month of birth, and perhaps, family deity. Certain times of the year are astrologically inauspicious (such as *amavas* or the month of *Poh*) and if a child happens to be born at one of these times, certain rites may be necessitated. For example, if a child is born under the evil influences of the moon, various white articles are given away in charity, i.e. silver, rice white cloth, etc. Likewise for the sun, various red articles. Following the naming of the child and the horoscope, sweets are distributed to the family and friends.

On the thirteenth day, unless that happens to be astrologically inauspicious, the *panchap gutar* ceremony is held, in which the mother is purified. First she takes a bath in the room of her confinement, and if she had the services of a low caste midwife or *nain*, she gives the clothes she has been wearing to her. The mother is then led out of the room with water sprinkled on the ground before her. The five products of a cow (S.= *panchagavya:* urine, dung, milk, curds, and *ghi*) are mixed together with some regular water and some special water brought from the Ganges (*Ganga jal*) and administered to the mother, following upon her bath. These items are purifying agents (since they are cow-derived) utilized in situations of extreme defilement (such as birth and death) and restore the mother to a normal state of relative purity. She is now allowed out of the house.

Following the *panchap gutar*, the child's *mama* (maternal uncle) comes and presents *tamol* (cloth and money presented with the ritual circling motion around the recipient's head) to the child, his *banja*. This is the first act which establishes a direct relationship between the maternal uncle and his nephew (or niece) and thus is of considerable importance. It is noteworthy that since most women return to their parent's house for at least their first child, this rite usually occurs even before the child's father has seen the child. Following this action, a feast is provided and sometimes even a band engaged to celebrate the event.

Before proceeding to the next *samskara*, it would be of value here to note another custom which illustrates the special relationship of the *mama* and his *banja*, even though it is falling into disregard these days. If the child first teethes in its upper jaw it is considered of great potential danger to the maternal uncle. To avert the evil influences, the mother and her brother meet on the [illegible] outside her village. In complete silence and without looking at each other's face, the brother drives four nails into the ground in a square. He then touches his banja's teeth with a tray in which is contained some rice, white cloth, and money, and deposits it inside the nails. They then return to their respective villages. The primary symbolic property of nails is their invulnerability to *bhuts*. Thus, it may be supposed that the evil influence of the upper teeth are transferred to the tray and then placed between the nails to insure that a *bhut* doesn't use this "part" of the child as a means of harming it — or the uncle.

(6) *Niskarmana* (S)— not practiced

This ceremony. known only to the Brahmans, concerns the child's first view of the sun, and should also be performed by the maternal uncle. In it, the child is taken outside the house and placed on a square of freshly plastered cow dung in the light of the sun. This is followed by the worshipping of either the family deity (*kul devta*) or in a nearby temple, in which the child is made to perform *puja*. The gods are invoked to protect the child at all times. Afterwards, the child is given presents.

(7) *Annaprasana* (S)—occasionnally performed

This *samskara* upon occasion performed in Kangra (according to a family's ritual fastidiousness) is concerned with the child's weaning. On even months for a boy or odd months for a girl following the age of six months, an auspicious *murat* is astrologically determined by the *kul purohit*. On the day, the *Purohit* comes and performs a *havan* — oblations with the sacred fire (*Agni*) and *ghi*. For this *havan* the simpler of two basic floor designs and symbolic representations are used. As it is also used in the marriage *Sand* ceremony, a diagramatic explanation will be given at that point. Following the *havan*, the child is given his first bread, often along with some curds, honey, and *ghi*. Then a variety of articles representing different vocations such as a book, a farm implement, military weapon, etc. are placed around the child. Wheatever the child reaches for is considered to foretell his future occupation. This practice is pevalent all over North India. Finally, sweets are distributed to everyone present.

(8) *Chudakarana* (S); *Mundan* (H), *Jamalu* (P)

The *mundan sanskar* (derived from *munna*, "to shave", a term also used to mean a Hindu) is the child's first tonsure. This ceremony (performed only for males) is arranged for an even month in an odd year, usually age five. It may take place either at home (particularly if the *kul purohit* is to be called) or at a temple. As the Jawali Devi temple at Jwala Mukhi is considered to be particularly auspicious for this occasion, most Sunhet villagers go to this temple. If performed at home the *kul purohit* is usually called and the cutting is preceded by the performance of a *havan* of the same kind as in the *Anna-prasana* and the *Sand*.

The hair cutting itself is done by both the barber (either the *kul nai* "family barber" or the temple *nai*) and the father of the child. The child's hair, which having never been cut, is quite long, is first made into three braids; in the back and on both sides. Then following a brief *puja* to the *nai's* scissors and razor, the *nai* cuts first the right side and then the back side. The father completes the cutting of the left hand braid. The *nai* then shaves the head (usually) leaving the characteristic tuft called *Cuda* (S) *Sikha* (S), or *bodi* and *chotu* in the local languages.

The hair that has been cut is then mixed with cow dung, curds, and perhaps some coins. Then this is offered either to the *Devi* or the *kul devta*. Although the numbers are decreasing a number of children are at this point given a waist thread (*taragi* or *tagadri*) which they wear until they receive their *janeo* (sacred thread). Sweets or a feast is then distributed.

The main purpose of this ritual is not immediately clear and is, in fact, the source of differing opinions both historically, and within the village. Most classical interpretations place the emphasis on prosperity and long life. For example,

> I cut off the hair for long life, properly digesting food, productivity, prosperity, good progeny and valour. (Pandey: 1969, 100)
> Cutting and dressing of hair, beard and nails gives strength, vigour, life, purity and beauty. (Pandey: 1969, 94)

In counterpoint to this, most villagers refer to the fact that the child's first hair coming as it does from the mother's womb is particularly susceptible to *bhuts*, and therefore must be treated with special care. According to the Indian system of thought, this would normally introduce the notion of pollution — as any part of the body which is separated from the body (hair, nails, excretion, prespiration, etc.) are to different degrees impure. As we have seen, it is through these impurities that *bhuts* attack. However, this notion would seem to be contradicted by two actions. On the one hand, the hair as it is cut is treated as an object of worship rather than an impurity. This is evident from the way in which the hair is cut, that is, in the auspicious clockwise direction. Furthermore, it is then mixed with items of great purity (cow dung and curds) and offered to the deity. This contradiction between the purifying action of cutting, and yet the relative purity of the hair is confirmed from classical sources:

> The head was three times shaved round from left to right with the verse, "when the shaver shaves its head with the razor, wounding, the well shaped, purify his head, but do not take away his life." (Pandey: 1969, 100)

Relating the two interpretations offered, we are thus presented with the following construction of the problem. Cutting the hair is necessary for long life, progeny, and prosperity (the way of the house-holder). But this is a particularly dangerous operation due to the hair from the womb, and must in some way be protected even though it be impure. The *mundan sanskar* solves this problem by sacralizing the hair sufficiently so that it may be given to the goddess of protection. This is accomplished through the principle of the relativity of pollution and purity, and reveals, in Dumont's words, that

> It is true that there are things to which sacredness of one sort or another is permanently attached, but there are many more which can be either pure, impure,

> or neutral according to the circumstances. We are not dealing with a dichotomy in things but with an opposition in ideas. (Dumont: 1959, 20)

The above discussion of the *mundan sanskar* is not intended to be complete. I have left several things unanswered such as why hair cutting is necessary for the way of the householder and what the meaning of the *Sikha*, the tuft of hair, is. As these questions are beyond the scope of this account, it must be remembered that there are additional meanings to this ritual (just as there are to every ritual).

9) *Karnavedha* (S)— only for girls

The *Karnavedha* or boring of the ears has not been performed in Kangra among males for some time, although the men of the surrounding areas of Chamba and Kulu still pierce their ears and wear gold ear rings. Even in classical references, this action was largely devoid of religious significance — and that certainly is now the case when a girl is taken to a goldsmith to have her ears pierced. It appears to have been included as a *samskara* rather late in Indian history, and to have primarily served a social purpose. One medieval *smriti* source indicates a kind of social ostracism for those who do not pierce their ears:

> All the accumulated merits disappear at the sight of a Brahman through whose ear-holes do not pass the rays of the sun. No gift should be given to him in the *Sraddha* ceremonies (after death). If one gives, he becomes an Asura or demon. (Pandey: 1969, 104)

10) *Vidyarambha* (S)— not practiced

Vidyarambha, or "the beginning of knowledge" was a samskara which celebrated the child's learning of the alphabet and the beginning of his studies which would prepare him to become a full-fledged student at the *Upanayana*. The ritual consisted of a *puja* to Ganesh, Sarasvati, Luxmi, and Narayan followed by gifts given to the teacher. Now, of course, children learn the alphabet at school — but some of the same rituals have been carried over. It is common for the children to do a Ganesh puja when learning the alphabet, and also to take gifts to their teachers.

11) *Upanayana* (S); *janeo* (local languages)

The ceremony that resulted in the investiture of the sacred thread ushered the boy into the first *asrama* of the *Brahmacharia* — the celibate student. As a *Brahmacharia* he becomes a disciple of the *guru* (*achariya*) who gives him the sacred thread, and he joins the ranks of the *dvija*, the "twice-born". As this ceremony was supposed to be performed in the eight year for a Brahman, the eleventh for a Ksatria, and the twelfth for a Vaisya, the *asrama* was intended to last the years of a boy's studentship. However, among the Rajputs of Kangra (as well as many of the surrounding areas) this *asrama* is condensed into the length of the ritual itself. This ritual is usually performed as a part of the marriage ceremonies, and is thus described and discussed at a later point.

12) *Verdarambha* (S)— not practiced

Verdarambha, technically "the beginning of the Vedas", is classically a *samskara* which initiated the student into the study of the Vedas with an appropriate *puja*. This is not performed even among the local Brahmans in Kangra. In fact, various Kangra *purohits* interpreted this ceremony for me as that part of the *Upanayana* which deals with becoming a *yogi*.

13) *Kesanta* or *Godana* (S)— not practiced

Meaning literally the cutting of the beard and the gift of a cow, this *samskara* was concerned with the event of the Brahmachariya's first shave. In the era of the *Gryasutras*, this ritual shaving (which included the gift of a cow to the teacher) was the occasion for the repetition of the vows of a Brahmachariya to live a celibate studious life. However, in later years, this ritual was confused with the one following it (the *samavartana*) and thought to mark the end of the Brahmachariya's *asrama*.

14) *Samavartana* or *Snana* (S); *snan* (local languages)

This *samskara*, performed immediately before marriage, marks the end of the *Brahmacharia asrama*. In van Gennep's terms, it is the separation coming before the transition and reaggregation. Presently, it is found in much condensed form consisting of the final bath (*snan*) and dressing (*lara da prasahi*). However, the theoretical *samskara* is worth examining briefly for the light it can shed on the symbolic structure of the ritual system.

The necessity of performing the ritual immediately before marriage arises from the idea that it is necessary to have an *asrama* at all times. If a person remained for any time at all without an *asrama*, he incurred very grave *pap* (sin). In addition to paving the way towards an understanding of the *samskaras* as a whole ritual system, this suggests (as will be discussed later) that a very particular sort of time is involved between the *snan* and the completion of the marriage— such that the person is at no time (normal time) without an *asrama*.

The verses chanted by the *Brahmachariya* at the time of the *samskara*, help to elucidate the symbolism of fire and water. Prior to bathing, the student places several sticks on the *havan* as his last tribute to the Vedic fire, saying,

> The fires that dwell in the waters, the fire that must be hidden, the fire which must be covered, the ray of light, the fire which kills the mind, the unbearing one, the pain causing one, the destroyer of the body, the fire which kills the organs, these I leave behind, ... Therewith I besprinkle for the sake of prosperity, of glory, of holiness, of holy luster. (Pandey: 1969, 150)

The life of the *brahmacharia* was one symbolized by fire. For fire is heat, and heat is *tapas*, a term which also refers to the heat generated by austerities and the pure religious life. In his celibacy and discipleship, the *bramacharia* generates heat, the heat of asceticism ("the pain causing one", "the destroyer of the body", etc.). Water is purifying and holy, but it is also cooling; it forms a complementary opposition to fire. The heat of *tapas* is a compelling force which accumulates quantitatively, but it is fundamentally opposed to the life of a householder, to sexual intercourse, for it is "the unbearing one". The *Brahmacharia's* separation from the *Brahmacharia asrama* necessitates a separation from fire and heat through water, which is accomplished in this *samskara* by ritual baths.

B. The Samskaras: Marriage

Forms of Marriage

Shastric sources have generally recognized eight forms of marriage, including a number which are more logical possibilities of rare occurances than prescriptive forms. These are:

1) *paisacha*— capture of an unconscious woman. Technically, it was defined as "Cohabiting with a girl who is unconscious, sleepy, or intoxicated".

2) *raksasa*— capturing a woman by force. Although there undoubtedly were some marriages arranged in this fashion, the emphasis placed on this form both in the scriptures and among local informants suggests that marriage by capture is more of a model built into regular marriages than a frequent occurrence in the past.

3) *gandharva*— marriage by mutual love. That is, not arranged by the parents— corresponding to the modern Indian "love marriage". Technically, "where the bride and the bridegroom meet each other of their own accord and the meeting is consummated in copulation born of passion, that form is called *Gandharva*" (*Manu*).

4) *asura*— bride-price marriage. "Where the husband, after having paid money to the relations of the bride and the bride herself, accepts her out of free will."

5) *prajapatya*— daughter is given conditionally. Most commonly, the condition was a period of servitude by the bridegroom with this future father-in-law.

6) *arsa*— a special form of the *asura* where the bride-price is a pair of cattle for sacrificial purposes, and thus slightly more exalted.

7) *daiva*— the daughter is given to a Brahman priest. This appears to be a special variation of the last or *brahma* form.

8) *brahma*— the daughter is given as meritorious gift. So called because it was considered suitable for Brahmans, this was the purest form of marriage.

Presently, only two of these types of marriages are still performed: the *asura* or "bride-price marriage", and the *brahma* or *kanya dan* (daughter-gift) marriage. The bride–price marriage is severely disapproved of by the high castes (Rajputs and Brahmans) and thus its practice by some low caste families is covert. However, the Rajputs themselves admit with a certain amount of shame that in the past it was also common with them. Their present attitude regarding the bride-price is illustrated by the following overheard conversation during a marriage party:

> You know that our custom used to be giving money for a bride. What I want to ask the Brahmans and Sadhus is this— who first let this happen— that they could equate a bride *dan* (gift) with a money *dan* (gift). Why did they ever let this happen ?

Clearly, the *kanya dan* is the more prestigious and meritorious form of marriage — and it is the only form which includes the central sanskritic ceremonies of the *lagan-bedi*. Inasmuch as it had displaced other forms among the high-castes in what can only have been imitation of the plains, it is clearly a large element in the process of sanskritization occurring in Kangra. In this sense, it can to a certain degree be used as a yardstick to measure the degree of sanskritization in

Kangra relative to other hill cultures. In many more remote Himalayan areas aside from Chamba and Kulu, the *kanya dan* form of marriage is still just being adopted among the high castes, and the bride-price form still the rule. However, one must be very careful in applying this measure indiscriminately. Kangra has always distinguished itself from other hill cultures by its relative orthodoxy. Thus whereas high caste women in other areas work in the fields and are of measurable economic value, they are debarred from this work in Kangra. This fact, plus references in the Kangra Gazetter of 1880 indicating that the *kanya dan* form of marriage was already universal among the high castes suggests that Kangra, like other areas, really is a sub-cultural unit in which historical processes must be examined in their own terms.

Perhaps the most important and unique of these terms is the system of forming hypergamous alliances. In most Hindu areas in India, marriage patterns are based on caste endogomy and *got* (*gotra*— non-localized patrilineal clan) exogomy — including the mother's *got* in the prohibition. In the Punjab this is combined with a system of village exogomy as well, in which one cannot accept a woman from a village to which a woman in the same generation has been given. This latter prohibition is indicative of a special relationship between the "giver" and the "taker" of daughters which is reflected in the kinship system by the great respect with which the family who "received" is treated by the family who "gave". (A father will almost never visit his daughter in the village she was married to, and if he does it is considered very bad form to accept too much hospitality.) Kangra, lacking in village communities, has what I would consider to be a more elaborated form of this Punjab system in its sub-caste hypergamy.

This system finds its clearest enunciation among the Rajput due to the large number of sub-castes extant, although it is also present among the Brahmans and lower castes. The different castes form endogenous units within which daughters are ideally and usually given upwards to higher sub-castes. In the case of the Rajputs, the sub-castes are divided into two groups of higher and lower sub-castes which tend to function as independent endogomous units, although daughters from the lower group can be accepted by the higher without loss of caste status — even though such an alliance is socially disapproved unless there happens to be great financial compensation. This Kangra system, then, is able to maintain the Hindu prohibitions against inter-caste marriages and yet systematize into a heirarchy the relationship between giver and taker.

A further feature of Rajput orthodoxy is their prohibition against widow remarriage (not applicable to widowers). As this prohibition is not found among the lower castes (once again the economic value of the woman as a field-hand must be noted) there have traditionally been several informal types of marriage in existence for the marriage of widows. The most well known of these, the *jhanjhara*, consists merely in the couple circling a fire they have made or in the widow resuming the *balu* or nose ring which is worn only by married women. As this is not allowed in Rajput society, there has built up a variety of distinctions which govern relationships outside of the original marriage. Although the customs of leverite, polygamy, and "concubinage" are not socially approved, instances of their happening are not altogether rare, and a variety of rules are available to deal with the consequent problems of inheritance, etc. As these are beyond the scope of this study, I will primarily concern myself with the *kanya dan* or daughter-gift form of marriage placing it within the cultural context by comparative data.

THE RITUALS

It is not possible to understand marriage rituals as clearly defined units of time and action, nor to differentiate them from actions which, although predetermined, appear to be mainly social or economic. These considerations mean that to a certain degree arbitrary lines must be drawn. Thus the following organization is primarily for heuristic purposes, and although it follows the classifications used by the people themselves, it sometimes considers separately rituals which could be thought of as parts of another ritual, and the converse.

Marriage ceremonies for Kangra Rajputs:

1. *kurmai* (betrothal)
2. *saugan* (betrothal finalized)
3. *murats/chei* (astrological determinations/wood gathering)
4. *jatar* (worship of *kul devta*)
5. *samuts* (preparatory baths)
6. *tel* (oil)
7. *janeo* (sacred thread)
8. *kangana* (wrist bands)
9. *lara da prasahi/mama* (dressing groom/mother's breasts)
10. *tamol* (ritual gifts)
11. *janet* (marriage party, H *barat*)
12. *gei* (preliminary *puja*)
13. *milni* (meeting)
14. *tel telai/rira* (oil and shawl for bride)
15. *snan* (bath)
16. *lagan* (*kanya dan* and first half of wedding service)
17. *bedi* (actual wedding including *havan*, etc.)
18. *lavan* (circumambulating fire; H *phera*)
19. *sirgundi* (hair-combing)
20. *janet's* return
21. *andara/Ganes puja* (entrance/Ganesh *puja*)
22. *gunu kelna* (playing *guna*)
23. *gotar malana* (changing *gotras*)
24. *suratra* (groom's bath)
25. *devte pherne* (worship of gods)
26. *dharan da puja* (worship of *dharan* tree)
27. *muklava* (brides's return to groom's house)
28. *troza* (bride's third return to groom's house)
29. *gidha* (womem's singing and dancing when *janet* is away)

In the following presentation of these rituals, I have been primarily concerned with description and analysis of some of the symbols and ritual actions contained within them. As all of the rituals are interrelated and form sequential cycles on different levels, I have left to a later point the analysis of the rituals's purposes (telic structures), role structures, and overarching symbolic meanings. The data presented here is based on observation (and participation) in three complete marriage ceremonies, parts of several others, and later cross-checks with informants. At times I have drawn on data presented for surrounding areas taken for the most part from anthropologists and British Civil Service reports, although, particularly for Chamba, I have sometimes been able to augment this with my own inquiries.

(1) *Kurmai*

Betrothals are generally arranged several years in advance of marriage. When daughters approach marriageable age (now-a-days 16-20 years), the father starts to look around and make inquiries from relatives living in other areas for a suitable match. Aside from the necessary conditions of caste and sub-caste, villagers agreed on the priority of the following criteria in choosing potential husbands: a) a "good family" i. e. respected, well off, etc., b) a boy who was healthy with no important defects (usually 20-25 years of age) and c) evidence of a good financial future, i. e. land, education, or a job. Once a potential husband is found, any relative or friend can act as a middle man in approaching the family.

If no immediate objections are found, the next step is the "meeting of the *tevas*" (*janam patris* — horoscopes). As a rule, the boy's *teva* is sent with the *kul purohit* to the girl's family. If the girl possesses a horoscope (they are not always made for females) the *purohits* from each family would then compare them to make sure they did not disagree. If there is violent disagreement between them, the betrothal is not made, for it is believed that if the two married one or both of them might die soon after marriage.

(2) *Savgan*

If the *tevas* are found to match, and both parties are consenting, the *savgan* (H *sagai;* S=*varavarana*) is performed to finalize the betrothal. The girl's father or his representative goes to the groom's house and offers cloth, money, and raisins to the groom (or his father). If the groom accepts, it means that the arrangements are finalized and the betrothal set. As in all of the marriage ceremonies, these actions are accompanied by special songs sung by the women in the next room. At the completion of the *savgan* it is important to note that the *susaral* ("in-law") relationship is considered to have been established.

The gift of the cloth and the money is a standardized ritual procedure which is repeated at different times and between different people throughout the marriage ceremonies, and is called *tamol* in Pahari (H *tambol*). Although each of these situations have not as yet been examined, it may be noted that they always herald a new kinship relation or the end of an old one. It is important to note here that as in the marriage itself, it is the bride's father who is the "giver", and this act appears in a sense to prefigure the gift of this daughter to the groom.

The symbolism of the raisins is clarified by comparative data. Pandey states that according to some *shastras,* fruit should be given as well as cloth; in Rampur songs, this fruit is named as coconut (Lewis: 1958, 169). Previously, the connection between fruit and fertility has been noted — a connection which is reinforced by other rituals. Fertility is consistently associated with prosperity. Thus, it is not unlikely that in this case, too, the raisins are a symbol of the fruitfulness being given to the groom's family by the bride's family, just as the bride herself is her father's "fruit".

(3) *Murats/Chei*

The days of the wedding are decided by the principals in consultation with their respective *purohits*. When the time approaches, the *purohits* are again summoned to establish the *murats* (the astrological units of time discussed before) for the different rituals. In addition, the *murats* are taken for the principle preparatory activities, such as the buying of the food supplies, the dowry, etc. The most important of these is the *chei* — the cutting of the wood that will be used for the sacred *havan* (wedding fire) and the fires to keep the guests warm. The former sacred fire must have mango (*amb*) wood, but the latter may be whatever is easily available. In some areas the *chei* is celebrated by a special feast following the collecting.

(4) *Jater*

A week or two before the wedding, at a time established by the *murats*, the *jater* ceremony is performed. The word *jater* most probably derives from *jat* meaning "born" (S. *ja,* to be born), and could carry the connotations of the related words *jati* or *jat* meaning "caste" or "related group", but specifically means "pilgrimage" (H. *jatri*). In this ceremony the groom goes with his mother (and perhaps his father) to her original home. Here they are joined by the groom's maternal uncle (*mama*) and go to the *mama's kul devta* (preferably a Sidh) to do *puja*. This *puja* is said to be done "to insure a good marriage with offspring". Later, if the married couple obtain offspring, another *puja* is performed at that time.

In special circumstances, the timing and participant members may have to be altered. Ten days before the third wedding I attended, there was a death in Sunhet. As the groom's *mama* was a resident of Sunhet, the *jater* would ordinarily have been performed in Sunhet prior to the wedding. However, due to the pollution of death this had to be postponed until after the wedding, at which point the bride was also brought for the *jater puja.*

(5) *Samuts*

In preparation for the *samuts* and other rituals which will take place indoors, the houses are freshly plastered with cow dung and designs are painted around the doorways. These designs, called *dwar likwai* ("door writings") consist of ornamental lines with red flowers and indicate the "specialness" of the room in which the ceremonies are to be held.

The *samut* ceremonies (called *ban* in the Punjab and U. P.; possibly deriving from the S. *samut* prefix meaning "rising") are the ritual baths taken by both the bride (*lari*) and groom (*lara*) in their respective houses. There must be at least two *samuts* at each home performed on consecutive days, and there are often three to four. The *lara* (groom) completes his *samuts* on the day before the wedding, whereas the bride performs her last one just before the wedding.

In each *samut*, the *lara* takes a bath while seated on a small square wooden stool (*chonki*). Following the bath, the women and men of his family anoint his body with a mixture of *chole*

Plate 7. Kangra landscape around Sunhet village with Dhauladhar Ridge in background.

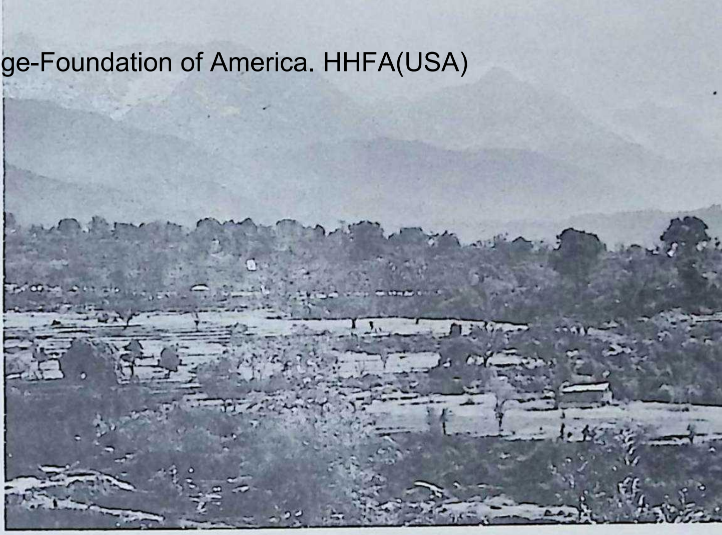


Plate 8. Typical Rajput house in Kangra.

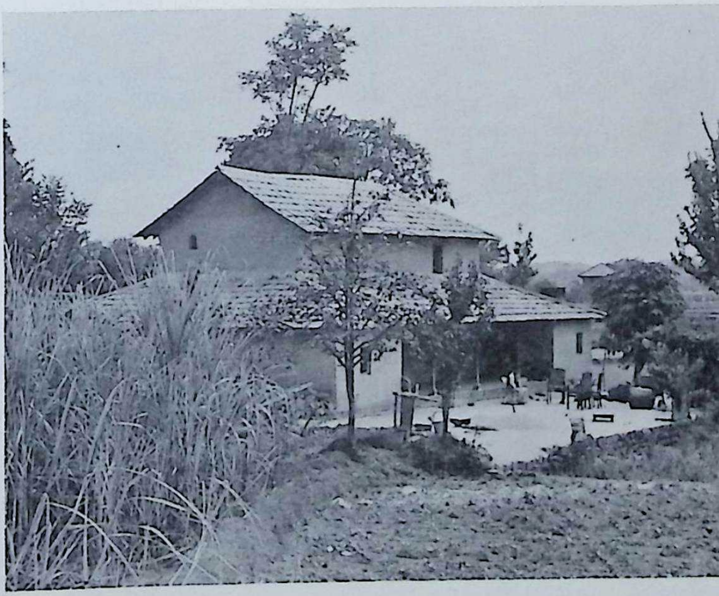
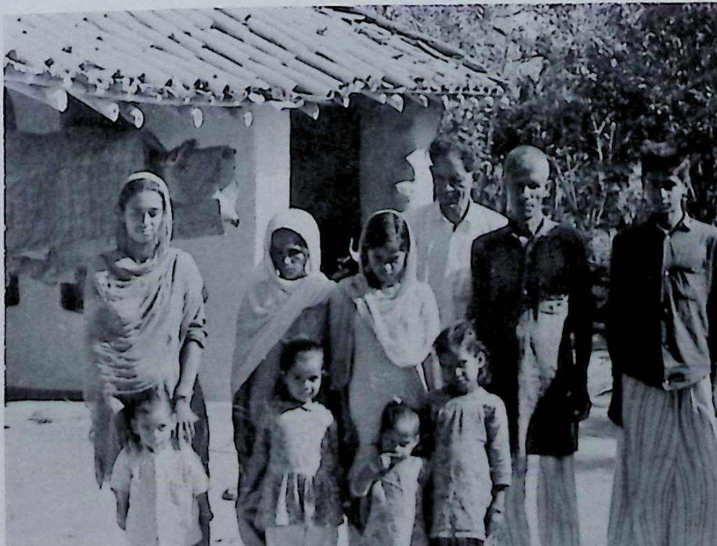


Plate 9. A low caste (Harijan) family.



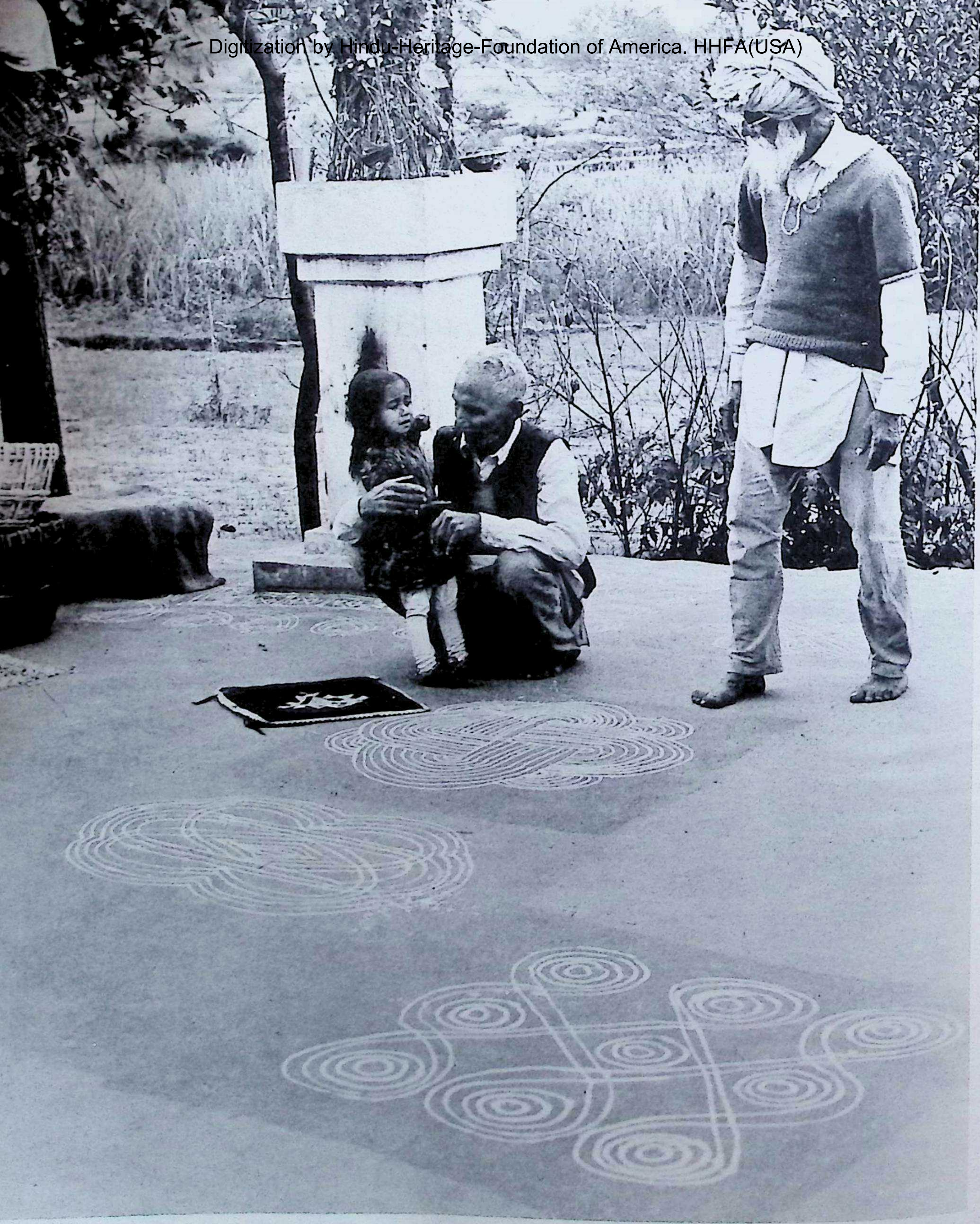


Plate 10. Rajputs with Divali designs on courtyard and Tulsi Tree on pedastal.

(chick peas) and *babaru* (a mixture of wheat and molasses). On the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet a paste consisting of *mehndi* and *butna* (tumeric and henna stain) is rubbed in until they are stained a tumeric-red color. This anointing is done with considerable joking and singing on the part of the women.

The two songs sung are recorded and translated below. As the songs are in "pure" Pahari for which there are no dictionaries compiled, and since I was not able to do the translations in the field where it would have been possible to check their accuracy, I include the texts as well. Throughout this chapter, the translations must be considered to be approximate renditions.

samuhat ke samya ka ganga (A)

chorus: vaye va katora butne da
1) malendiyan do jniyan daraniyan jataniyan ke sakiyan maindiyan
chorus
2) mai hun suniya bazar (*name*) put raolan da
chorus
3) mai hun suniya bazar ———— put raolan da etc.

samuhat (B)

chorus: do banjare maide jo bheje sah banjare na ae
1) thora thora butna mere *sathiyan* jo deyo hor malo angan mere
chorus
2) thora thora butna mere *bao* jo deyo hor malo angan mere etc.

TRANSLATION

Song at time of samut (A)

chorus: all praises to the cup of *butna*
1) O two women, mix true frightening and deceiving *mehndi*
chorus
2) I have heard in the bazaar that (*so and so's*) son has been "raising hell"
chorus
3) I have heard in the bazaar that (*so and so's*) son has been "raising hell", etc.
substituting different names of people who live in the village

Samut song (B)

chorus: send two grain-dealers worth of barley flour—only don't bring the grain-dealers with it
1) give just a little *butna* to my *friends* and rub it and rub it on my limbs
chorus
2) give just a little *butna* to my *father* and rub it on my limbs, etc. substituting the various different relatives

These songs aid in understanding the ritual symbols and acts in the *samuts*. Song A shows that the relation between the people and the cup of *butna* is one of praise; the cup is invoked as something which contains power and purity — much as a god is invoked, except the words "*vaye va*" ("wonderful") do not denote the respect that is reserved for the gods. Furthermore, the *mehndi* mixture is described as "frightening and deceiving". Crooke notes that,

> The hands and feet are also means by which Bhuts enter the body. (Crooke: 1895, I.242)

The reason for this vulnerability according to the principles of *bhut* danger noted previously is the relative impurity of the feet and hands — for the feet walk on dirt and are clothed by leather while the left hand is used for toilet purposes and the right hand for eating. It is logical, then, that the *mehndi* is frightening and deceiving to *bhuts*, and that its application to the feet and hands serve to protect the groom. Baths are consistently used to purify a person in Hindu ritual. The groom under-going this process of purification requires the *mehndi* (it may be noted that tumeric is used also for making the religious mark on the forehead) to maintain him in the states of purity achieved through the baths.

Song B shows how these actions involve the groom's kinship network. It is particularly his kin who are responsible for protecting the groom (and the bride in her respective home), and perhaps more significantly, it is particularly in relation to his kin that the groom is being separated into a pure state. The references to the sons of other people as "raising hell' perhaps may be understood as a method of praising the groom by degrading the others in his peer group.

(6) *Sand/Tel*

On the day before the wedding party leaves the groom's house the band which has been arranged for, arrives. This event is called *maine bhajne*. Traditionally, the band used for Rajput weddings was composed of *shanais* (a traditional reed instrument) and special drums. Among wealthier Rajputs this tradition is still maintained but even then does not exclude the presence of the ubiquitous wedding band of Western instruments playing popular Indian and some foreign tunes.

Following the arrival of the band in the evening after dinner is the *Sand* ceremony. This ritual centers around a *havan* which is lit within a diagram made on the floor by the Brahman prior to the *puja*. This diagram, reproduced separately on the following page, also indicates the seating arrangement for the *Sand*.

The *Sand* commences with a *puja* performed by the *Purohit* called the *naugre*, or "nine planets". As the name indicates, the *naugre* is the invocation of the nine "planets" or constellations (S. *navagraha*): *Suraj* (Sun), *Chandar Ma* (Moon), *Mangal* (Mars), *Budh* (Mercury), *Guru* (Jupiter), *Shokar* (Venus), *Suni* (Saturn), and *Rabivar* and *Ket* (*Rahu* and *Ketu* — the ascending and descending modes). Following the *naugre*, *puja* is then done to *Ganesh* (who is invoked at the beginning of all enterprises) and the other deities represented on the diagram: *Brahma, Siva, Vishnu, Barun* (*jal* or water), *kul devta*, ancestors, etc.*

Following this is the *Agni Puja*, the worship of the *havan* or ritual fire. It is believed that the fire used to start by itself through an invocation of *Agni*, but that this has ceased to occur in the present degenerate age of the *kulyug* (*kaliyuga*— the last and most degenerate of the four ages). The *puja* is performed by all of the *bradri* (relatives) seated around the diagram. Each one of these persons is given a mixture of *shakar* (brown sugar), *til* oil (from sesame), and *ghi;* the groom is given a ladle and a pot full of pure melted *ghi*. The *Puriohit* reads various *mantars* and at the end of each repeats the special formula *Om Svaha*. The people repeat after him the phrase *svaha* and throw a little of the mixture on the fire, while the groom puts on a spoonful of *ghi*. This section is completed with a final *puja* to the *naugra*. After each one of the "planets" has been invoked, the *nai* or barber who has been called in for the purpose puts various articles on the groom's ladle of *ghi* which are then put in the fire with the *mantar svaha*. These articles consist of almonds, *kusa* grass, nuts, *halva* (wheat cooked with sugar), and some grains.

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* Many of these deities, especially the *naugre* would seem to be worshipped only in very ritualized circumstances; however, it is noteworthy that there is a temple to *Shokar Devta* (Venus) at a nearby town that is regularly used.

During the preceeding *puja*, the women, who are seated further back in the same room as well as in the next room, sing this song:

sand baitne da git — pandat de puja karan da vakt

1) jamuna te par je pada tulsi da butae uthe te tulsi mangaeo sandi baitne da karoe
2) jamuna te par je pada koi gua dugendi uthe te goha mangaeo sandi caonka puao
3) jamuna te par je pada sarson da buta uthe te sarson mungaeo sandi kote nu bhareoe etc. chane, maki, gyon, etc.

Song of Sand-Sitting — at the time of the Brahman's puja

1) If across the Jumna there are growing bushes of *Tulsi* then bring the *Tulsi* and do the *Sandi* sitting ceremony
2) If across the Jumna there is located any grazing cows, then bring *gobar* (cow dung) from there and put it on the *Sandi* square
3) If across the Jumna any mustard plants are growing then bring mustard from there and fill up the Sandi grainery, etc. listing all the grains and vegetables.

Following the *puja* is the *kangana* ceremony. In this, the *purohit* ties a red thread around the groom's right wrist to the accompaniment of special *mantars*.

As the *Sand puja* can partially be understood as a prelude to this tying of the *kangana*, it is of value to investigate some of its meanings. The *kangana* remains on the groom's wrist until the *dharan da puja* following the wedding. At that time, both the bride's and groom's *kangana* are taken off by a male and female who become, through this act, the brother and sister of the couple— called *dharam bhai* and *dharam bahn* (brother and sister through *dharam*). Thus in this sense, its meaning lies in its potential for new kinship relations. Furthermore, I was told by the *purohit* and spectators, that the *mantars* which the *purohit* chanted as he tied the *kangana* were to the effect that "for now, I am a *brahmachari*". However, this would seem to be a premature statement, as the ceremony in which the groom dons the sacred thread of the *brahmachari* has yet to come.

Turning to the *Atha vivaha paddhti*, the written copy of the sanskritic *mantras* used yb the *purohit*, this problem may perhaps be clarified. The shastric marriage ceremony outlined in the *vivaha paddhati* does not coincide with the one used in Kangra, but most of the same elements are present, and it is the literary source of the *purohit's* actions. In it, the *kangana* is called a *paunci* and is also referred to as the *raksabandhanam* and the *varanam*. *Rasksabandhanam* literally means "binding of the protection", the same name which is used in the Rakri festival. This meaning is amplified by the *mantra* recited when it is tied on which I give here in rough translation:

> By this bond I capture the great strength of the demon king Inder; O protective amulet, do not leave (me). (*Atha vivaha paddhti:* 18)

The second name, *varanam,* literally means "choosing", a name which is nowhere explained in the Sanskrit text, suggesting that it probably refers to the kinship meaning given above.

That the *kangana* with these different meanings should find its place in the same ritual illustrates the spectrum of meaning contained in all of these rituals. But they are not mutually exclusive, and the central reference contained in all of them can be found in the ritual state of the groom. A religious "relationship" is established between the groom and various elements of the religious cosmos. The *naugre*, the "trinity" and various other deities (notably *jal* or water) are invoked by the family members through the mediation of *Agni* and the *purohit* and their protection sought. This protection, necessitated by the groom's "abnormal state", is symbolized by the *kangana.* But it is precisely this state of abnormal purity which in separating the groom from his previous situation opens up the possibility for new kinship relations, both in marriage and in the adoption of new "brothers" and "sisters".

After the *kangana* has been tied, the *tel* ("oil") ceremony is held. In this ceremony, for which the *purohit* is not required, the barber holds a leaf cup on the top of the groom's head in which there is some *tel* (sesame oil) and a *drub*. A *drub* is several stalks of *drub* grass which have been tied together to make a small brush. It is used as a ritual instrument whenever water or oil is to be utilized in a ritual. In this case, first the female relations and then the male relations go to the groom and, putting a small coin in the cup, take the *drub* and move it several times over the groom's head. The coins are later taken by the barber.

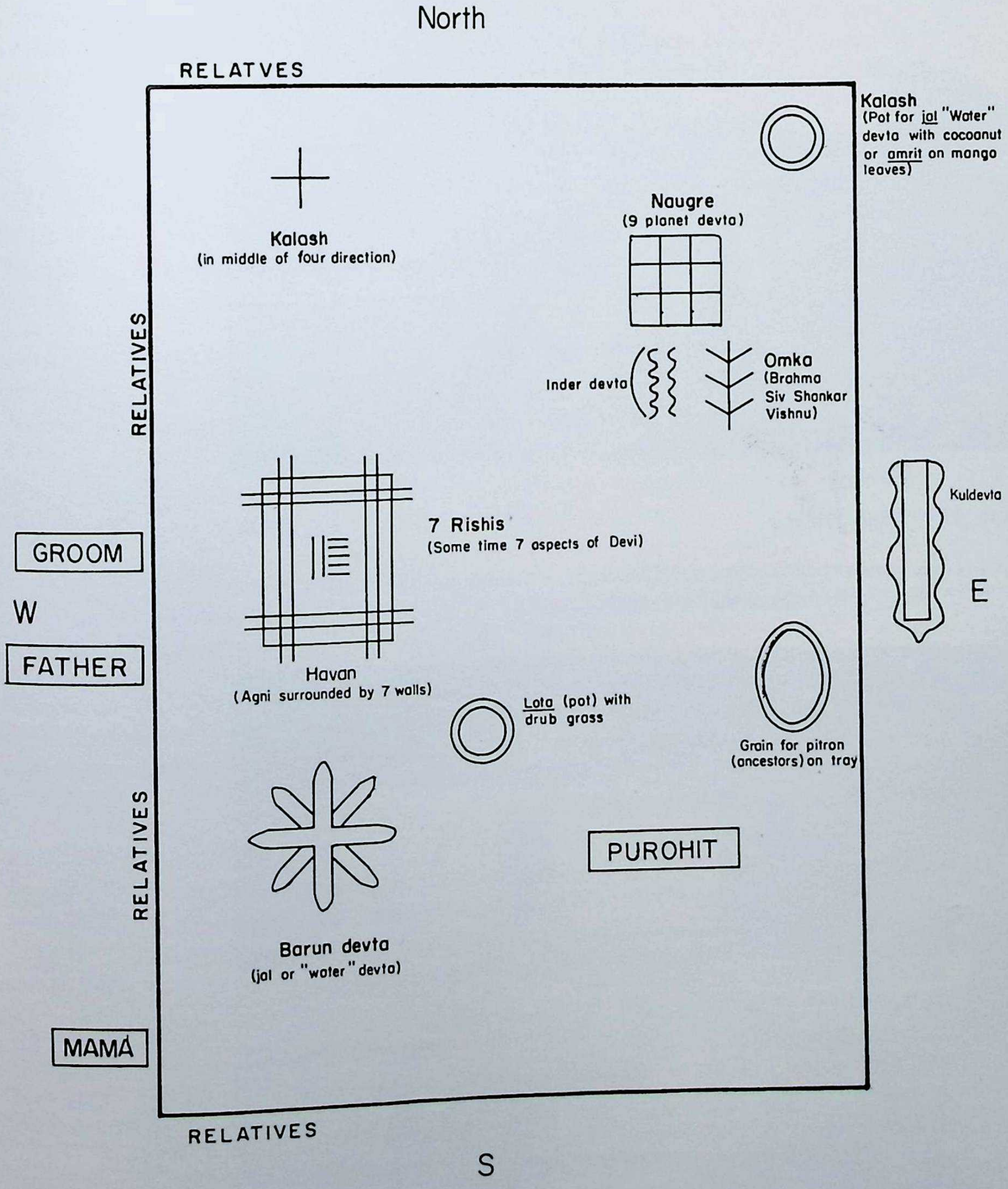
The *Sand* and the *Tel* are also performed at the bride's house but not until just before the wedding, after the oil which has been used by the groom is given to the bride's people. Although in Kangra this is performed in the same manner as the groom's, there is some indication that the mother's brother is of more importance in the bride's ritual. (Newell: 1865, 498).The Kangra Gazeteer records that the following song is sung:

> Come down gods from your heavenly regions and sit down amongst us. We cannot come up to you; come down. Oh Brahma and Vishnu sit with us. (1926, 44)

This notion of the gods sitting with the people is further substantiated by the Sunhet songs translated earlier in the ceremony called *Sandhi*-sitting, in which the site is made sacred with cow dung, the tulsi plant, and various grains.

(7) *Janeo*

After a short break following the *tel* ceremony, the groom is brought back in the *Sand* room where he undresses in the corner. He is given pieces of saffron cloth which he dons, tying


North
RELATVES
Kalash
(Pot for jal "Water" devta with cocoanut or amrit on mango leaves)
Kalash
(in middle of four direction)
Naugre
(9 planet devta)
Inder devta
Omka
(Brahma Siv Shankar Vishnu)
RELATIVES
Kuldevta
7 Rishis
(Some time 7 aspects of Devi)
GROOM
W
E
FATHER
Havan
(Agni surrounded by 7 walls)
Lota (pot) with drub grass
Grain for pitron (ancestors) on tray
RELATIVES
PUROHIT
Barun devta
(jal or "water" devta)
MAMA
RELATIVES
S

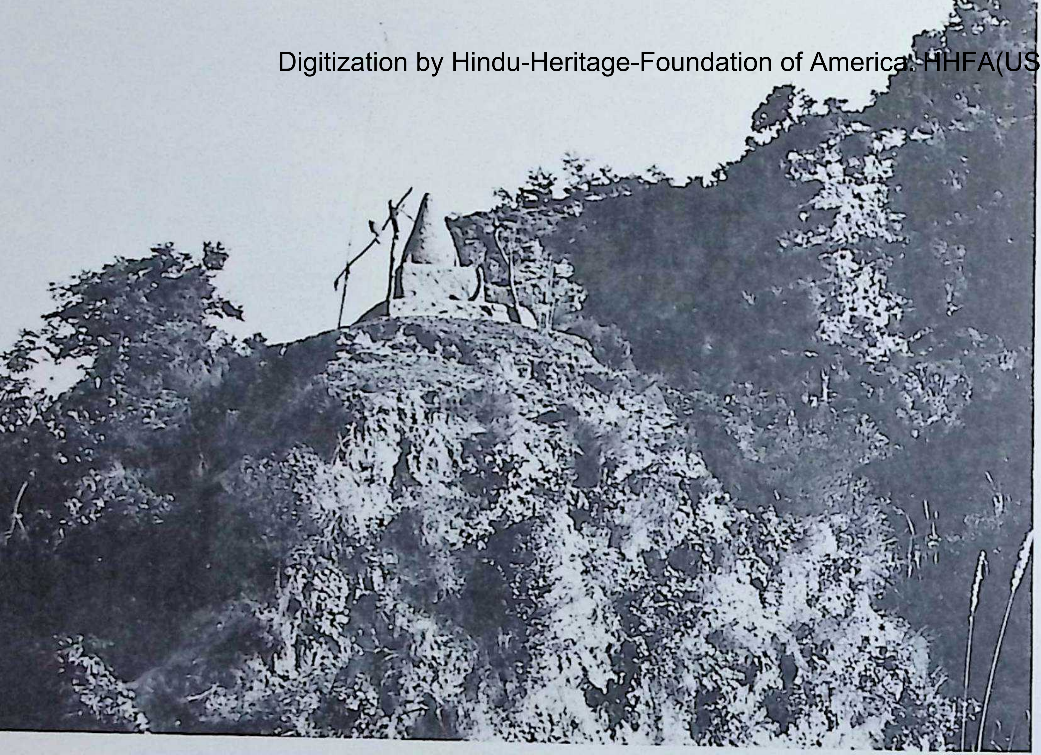
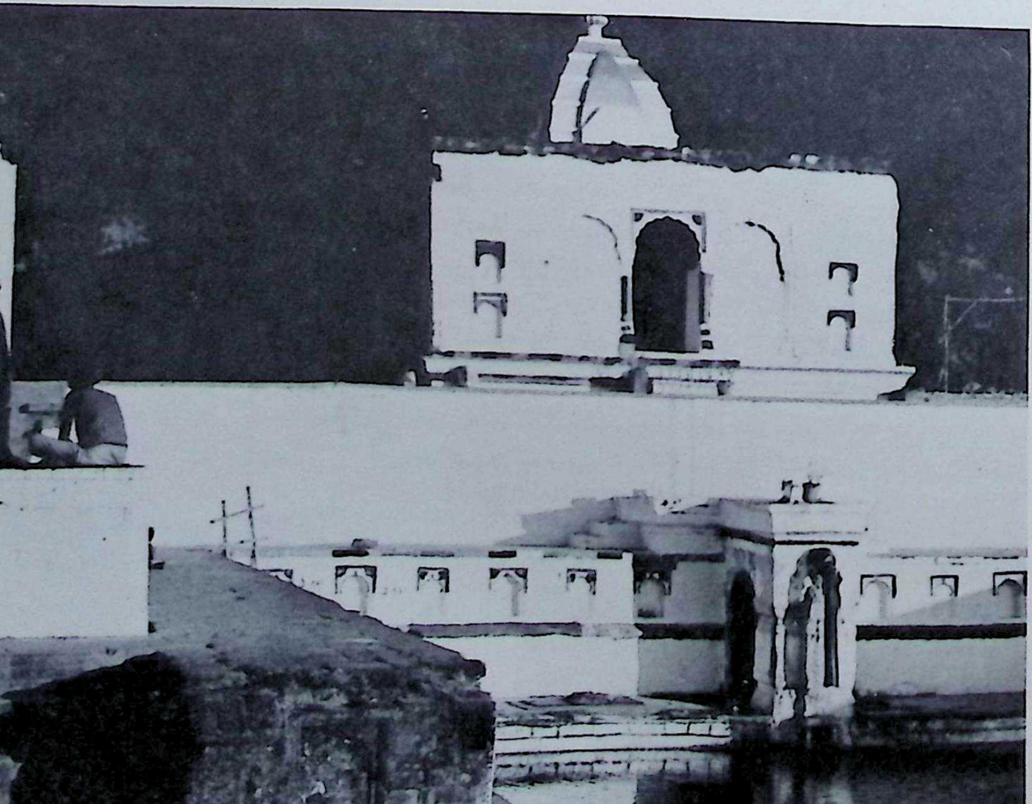


Plate 11. Sidh Shrine.

Plate 12. Excavated temple at Chinyari. Sadhu responsible for excavation sits on platform at left.



them around his waist with a string. The saffron cloth is the mark of the ascetic, and this ceremony is called *jogi*, for the groom is considered to become at this time a *yogi* or *sadhu*. As all *sadhus* must have a *Guru*, the *purohit* becomes the groom's *Guru* by reading him the *Gurmantar* (*Guru mantra*.)

Following the *Gurmantar*, the barber puts a deer skin over the groom, takes him out into the courtyard and shows him the four directions as a symbolic abbreviation of actually having travelled them. Since the groom as a *jogi* must be a *bhiksu* (a beggar, owning nothing) he must then beg alms. These alms must first of all be begged from his parents at his own threshhold for it is said that no one can become a *sadhu* unless he has first received the alms and blessings of his parents.

Following the begging, the groom goes outside the courtyard and the marriage gate (*torna*) amid much joking. He is called back by his relatives, especially his *mama* (maternal uncle), and returns to be accepted by his parents and become a *ghristi* (householder). He is then taken inside, and the *purohit* puts the *janeo* (sacred thread) over his head.

The ritual items in this ceremony are few. The saffron clothes symbolize the *sadhu* who has renounced the clothes of normal life. In the *shastras*, it is apparent that the girdle which holds these clothes is a female containment or completion:

> Here has come to me, keeping away evil words, purifying mankind as a purifier, clothing herself by power of inhalation and exhalation, with strength, this sisterly goddess, the blessed girdle. (Pandey: 1969, 131)

It is probable that this symbolism is more or less unknown. The use of the skin (it need not be deer) also represents a *jogi*. Siva the great ascetic like many lesser saints is often represented as clothed and seated on a skin. Thus the skin is even a stronger symbol of the renunciation of the social world for the non-social (in this case, natural) than the saffron clothes.

The *janeo* worn in Kangra is made of cotton and composed of six threads. According to the *shastras*, every aspect of the *janeo* is symbolic. For a Brahman its length is ninety-six times the width of four fingers (for a Rajput, ninety-five), Each of these four fingers represents one of the four states of man's soul: waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, *samadhi* (mystical union). These sources also state that only three threads should be worn (representing the three *gunas*), but that as a householder, the man may wear three additional threads for his wife. This may be the reason that six threads are worn in Kangra. The *janeo* should be worn at all times, but when urinating or defecating, the wearer must hookit over the ear so that it will not be in line with the *nali* (channel) of spiritual strength that runs from the groin to the head. Otherwise its purity would be polluted. Informants also stated that if any of the threads break in the first six months, the whole ceremony must be repeated.

Originally, in Vedic times, it appears that the *janeo* was not obligatory and represented the initiation of Brahman boys into the stage of their priestly training. However, as soon as the notion of the *asramas* took hold, it came to represent the initiation into the first *asrama* of *Brahmacharis*, in other words, . the initiation into ritual life itself in the form of the *asramas*. By the time of Manu, this meaning was predominate, and the *janeo* was an obligatory symbol of religious-social status: "If after the last prescribed time people remain uninitiated, they become Vraytas, fallen from Savitri, discarded by the Aryans." (Pandey: 1969: 121). This initiation represented a birth into society, and thus the boy was henceforth called *dvija* or "twice-born".

The death-rebirth symbolism characteristic of initiation ceremonies was clearly present in Vedic literature:

> The teacher, taking him in charge, makes the Vedic student an embryo within; he bears him in his belly three nights; the gods gather unto him to see him when born. (Pandey, 113)

The transitional "three nights" are also found in the *Kanthapanisad* (Helfer: 1968) and in the later Shastric literature as the *triratravrata* (three-nights-ceremony) of fasting and sleeping in the day, that is of ritual death. However, although the phrase *dvija* or twice-born is still current, it is apparent from the previous description that no three nights of "death" are contained within the Kangra *Upanayana* (*janeo*) ritual.

Examining the symbolic events which do occur in the ritual, there is first the relationship of the *Guru* established with the saffron-robed groom. The *Gurmantar* recited at this occasion is the well known *Gayatri,* the *mantra* which has always been given to the *Brahmachari* at this ceremony, and which should be recited by pious Hindus at various points during each day.

> *tatsaviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyoyo nab pracodayat*
> Let us meditate on the most excellent light of the Creator (the Sun); may he guide our intellect.

Having received this *mantra*, the groom's position has changed in possibly three ways: a) he now has the necessary *Guru* for religious instruction, b) he has been admitted into the society of religious individuals such that he is allowed to know and repeat the sacred *mantra,* and c) I would argue that through the *mantra* he has established a special relationship with the Sun which he develops through the *tapas* of his asceticism.

Having received the *mantra*, the groom goes on symbolic pilgrimages to the four directions of the world. In neighboring Chamba this journey is more explicitly symbolized by proceeding to three basins for bathing, the basins representing the sacred spots of Badrinath, Triloknath, and Mani Mahesh. As it appears incongruous for this "journey" to occur before the groom actually leaves the courtyard in the next event, it may be more meaningful to understand these pilgrimages in the latter sense of bathing, a ritual purification prior to his actual departure — but this remains unclear.

In becoming a *bhiksu* and begging alms from his parents, the groom approaches his family as someone other than their son. By giving the alms, the parents give validity to the position of their son as an ascetic, and sanction his departure from their house. But when the groom goes, he is carried back. It is at this point during the ceremony that the groom could just keep on going as a *Sadhu* (i.e. the previous rituals had worked to separate him completely from his family)—but I was told half-seriously that no one would let this happen for the marriage had all been arranged. The reality of the possibility, though, is even more clearly demonstrated in the Chamba ceremony where the *purohit* asks him whether he wishes to devote himself to *jatera* (world business) or *matera* (an ascetic life) and he invariably answers "To *jatera*". (Hutchinson, in Newell: 1965, 47). In other parts of India, this question is repeated three times before the groom with a show of reluctance finally consents to return to society and become a householder- further demonstrating the value placed on the ascetic life and the inherent tension between them.

From informants both in Kangra and Chamba, I was told that the reason that the groom had to become a *Sadhu* was in order for him to receive the *janeo*. "Without becoming a *jogi*, he cannot receive the *janeo*." When asked why, informents would reply that "only this way can he become *pavitar* (pure, sacred) enough." According to the *shastras*, this new-found sacredness was accomplished through initiatory death and rebirth after which the *brahmacharia* became an ascetic. The disappearance of the former actions and the reversal of the latter such that the groom first becomes a *sadhu* so that he may receive the *janeo* would seem to confuse the identity of the two rituals. However, I would argue that they are in some basic respects identical, even if the modern performance appears to be a condensed vestige of the older rituals.

Structurally, this ritual is dealing with the opposition of ascetic/householder, or in the terms of the *asramas*, *bramacharia/ghristi*. As we have seen, though, the *asrama* of the *bramacharia* exists for the Rajputs merely on a ritual level— for the groom is considered a *brahmacharia* merely for the duration of the ritual. Thus the present ritual is translated into the more meaningful terms of the *Sadhu* and the householder. The problem is to accomplish the transition from childhood which has no ritual-social status, to householder defined ritually and in a position to marry. The *samuts* and *Sand* which have been purifying the groom (and simultaneously separating him from his family relations) though, lead logically to the celibate life of the ascetic, not to that of the householder. That is, in order to be purified from the state of childhood to the state of the *asramas*, the groom is caught in the contradiction of becoming a celibate in order to become a husband. This contradiction is central to Hinduism, and is developed at length in later "manifestations."

At this point, it becomes necessary only to realize how the groom's becoming a *jogi* serves as an initiation (a transition) into the "twice-born". In a significant sense, the notion of ritual death is still valid. In becoming a *jogi*, begging alms from his parents, etc. the groom has died to his previous existence and joined the ranks of those who are no longer defined by caste or kinship. As a Rajput of such and such a family, gotra, subcaste, etc., he no longer exists. That is, the groom becomes the *opposite* of everything he was and is about to become in order to accomplish the transition. He steps outside of the courtyard only to be called back to re-enter society. Thus while the Vedic ceremony accomplished the transiton by "three nights of death", the loss of the *brahmacharia asrama* as a social reality allows the Kangra Rajputs to accomplish the same transition through the groom's social "death" as a *sadhu*. As in his physical birth, the groom emerges again from a state lacking all ritual and social definition and is born again.

(8) *Lara da Parasahi*

On the day of the marriage party's departure, the groom is bathed and dressed for the journey in the ceremony called the *parsahi*.

The bathing takes place in the courtyard on the special low four-cornered stool (*chonki*). As soon as the groom has washed, the *mama* (maternal uncle) takes a pitcher of water he has brought especially for the purpose and stands under the *torna*, the gate of bamboo, mango leaves, and wooden birds on the edge of the courtyard. Three women of the groom's direct family then go to the *mama* with small earthen cups. Receiving water in these from the *mama,* they take the cups to the groom and pour the water on his feet while singing songs. They repeat this action a second time, but after receiving water from the *mama* the third time, they take it into the house and offer it before the place representing the *kul devta*. (In one ceremony witnessed, one of the women mistakenly poured the third cup also onto the groom's feet but was rescued by the groom who filled her cup with some of his bath water.)

Participants stated that this ceremony is done in honor of the *pirtrion,* the ancestors (S. *pitr*, father). The following explanation of the ceremony by a Brahman *purohit* in an area twenty miles away is recorded in Hindi by the Census of Indian Monographs:

> The Shastras state that if during a righteous (pure) ceremony there is impurity (*sutak*) due to the birth of a child, or impurity (*patak*) due to someone's death, then the ceremony is thought of as impure. In these instances, the fruit of the righteous (*subh*) ritual cannot be received. Thus this *sraddha* (worship of ancestors) is performed so that the fruit will be received even in the face of all impurities (with the following *mantra*):
>
> O father, grandfather, great-grandfather, you who cause increases; O mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, who also cause increases—keep everyone in the family pure. (*Hatli*, No. 9, p. 23)

However, *sraddha* is always performed by the eldest male member of the family, and this explanation fails to explain why this role should be filled by the *mama* and the groom's women. As it is the groom's feet which, along with the *kul devta*, are the recipients of the worship of the ancestors, it is clear that the groom is being worshipped as the living 'representative of the ancestors' line (*agnatic*), and that the water which serves as the libations must come from the maternal side. That is, the groom is through this ritual recognized as a member of his lineage, and the other (deceased) members are called upon to protect his transition and provide "increases" (*vriddha*), particularly of sons who will continue the line. Of considerable importance is the fact that although the groom is established in the patrilineage, the spouses of the patrilineal member's ancestors are also invoked, and the water which is the mode of recognition comes from the *mama* through the women. Thus the maternal uncle is placed in the same position as the father, which indicates his necessary role in the continuation of the patrilineage.

Following his bath, the groom is dressed in a new suit and pink turban given by the maternal uncle and the groom's elder brother's wife puts collyrium on his eyes. Finally, the *sehra* (S. *mukuta*, crown), a headdress of silver and golden tassels, is put on top of his turban by the *purohit*.

The importance of this *sehra* is emphasized in both the *shastras* and local songs. In the *Vivaha Paddhati*, the following Sanskrit *mantra* is recorded:

> Put on the brilliant crown in which is seen manifested the light of the whole heavens and the sun. (27)

In a song sung in Chamba, the description is similar:

> My impression was of thunder and lightning, but it is really a reflection of the *sehra* (Newell: 1965, 63)

At the time of the groom's departure, the following song about the *sehra* is sung by the women in Sunhet.

jane ke samay parsai ka git
tandi tandi tar pe teriya jani care
tanedar vira ve mai tanddiyan (chorus)
1) mukat par lagare hire pe teriya jani care
tere vire vira ve mai tanddiyan
2) mukat par lagare ae ve teriya jani care
tere tae vira ve mai tandiyan
3) mukar par lagare kane ve teriya jani care
tere nane vira ve mai tanddiyan

song of the parsai
chorus: at a cool good place go take your wife noble brave man — my heart is happy
1) attached to your crown are glittering diamonds, go take your wife, your brother is a noble man— my heart is happy
2) your crown is full of brilliance, go take your wife, your elder paternal uncle is a noble man— my heart is happy
3) your crown is one-eyed, go take your wife, your maternal grandfather is a noble man — my heart is happy

The *sehra's* association with the sun and lightning also indicate not only its brilliance, but its power. In the second marriage I attended, this power was mentioned by the participants, and due to the astrological situation, no one whose name began with a letter "m" (probably since *mukat* also begins with "m") was allowed to see it until after the first two hours, and even then only after performing *puja* to it. This power is also seen in the following slightly enigmatic song sung in Sunhet.

kali do ghati gujrat di vira ve
teri ghori ne mera man moh liya ghori
tainu sehra mangave dilli sahr te vira ve
tere mukte ne mera man moh liya kali
kali ghati gujrat di vira ve tere
mukte ne mera man moh liya kali
tainu ghari mangava dilli sahr di vira ve
teriya caina ne mera man moh liya kali
do ghata gujrat di vira ve

Two black clouds from Gujrat, O brother;
Your horse has charmed (disoriented) my mind;
For you, O brother, the *sehra* will be obtained from Delhi;
Your *sehra* has charmed (made confused) my mind,
Black, black clouds from Gujrat, O brother;
Your crown has charmed my mind.
For you, O brother, a car will be obtained from Delhi
Your appearance has charmed my mind,
Two black clouds from Gujrat, O brother.

As a further evidence of this power it is extremely important that a groom wearing a *sehra* never see another groom who is also wearing a *sehra*, or the evil results of *chaya* will result.

These characteristics of the *sehra* become intelligible by understanding its relationship to Vishnu — for it appears that the *sehra* is a manifestation of Vishnu and, significantly, the groom when he wears the *sehra* is identified with him. Aside from Vishnu's relationship with Surya, the Sun, this identification is consciously recognized by the people. For example, when we were transporting a groom to his future wife's village by jeep, an elder said,

At this time when he is wearing the *sehra* we think of the groom as Krishna.*

This is substantiated further by a wedding song sung a hundred miles away in Nahan:

Of which country is he (the groom) a king?
What is his name ?
Tell, what is his town ?
And what his country ?

Say he is the son of Dasratha;
He lives in Ayodhiya ;
Which, say, is the Eastern Country;
His name is Ram Chandar.

and in Sunhet:

suhag mangan babe den gaya
sunhag tainu ram devega
ghiye hath mehndi sis dori
vahi cura lal ve suhag tainu
ram devega
suhag mangan cace den gaiya
suhag tainu ram devega

Father has gone for the getting of the bride;
O bride, to you we will give *Ram.*
Mehndi on the palms of the hands, string on the head,
A red top-hair,
O bride, to you *Ram* will be given

---

* is vakt pe jalu sehra panijanda asan larajo Krisna samajda

Uncle has gone for the getting of the bride;
O bride, to you we will give *Ram*.

At this point, then, his ritual separation from his previous self has been completed. The groom, identified with Vishnu in one of his incarnations (Krishna) is ritually prepared for his journey to his bride's house, and the transition that takes place there.*

(10) *Tamol*

The *tamol* (H.=*tambol*, *neota*) is the name given to the ritual presentation of the gift of cloth and money. This occurs at different times throughout the marriage cermony, but its most important instance is during the *parsai* when *tamol* is given to the groom by the families of the hamlet and relatives usually through their respective women. Women who were unable to come to his home village continue to give *tamol* to the groom during his journey and arrival at the bride's village.

For this *tamol*, the groom is carried from the *Sandhi* room in which he was dressed to a box in the courtyard. *Tamol* is given by putting some *tikka* (tumeric) on the thumb of the right hand from the cup held by the family barber and anointing it on the groom's forehead. Then a small coin is taken in the same hand and circled around the groom's face in a clockwise fashion (called *uarpada*). The coin is given to the barber for this function, and gifts are given to the groom. The cash value of the gifts is recorded by a man appointed for that purpose, for it is the responsibility of the family receiving the money to give double the amount to the giver during a marriage in his immediate family.

Following the *tamol*, the groom is given the mother's breast to suck for the last time. This ritual is performed under a covering shawl and is prevalent over all of North India. It seems clear that this act, as well as the *tamol* from the relatives, completes the transition on the kinship level that has already been completed on the ritual level. Planaph (in Lewis: 1958, 48) has recorded a more elaborate ritual in which the mother threatens suicide until she has extracted a promise from the groom to return to her after the marriage, further strengthening this contention as well as revealing the significance of this *samskara* for the mother and others besides the groom and bride. This is also indicated by the fact that the *sehra* is covered by a handkerchief in Sunhet, and even removed in Rampur during the ceremony. Lewis records that the following song sung during the ritual :

Mother: O my son! I carried your burden in my womb for ten months. Now
settle the debt before you go.

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* In addition to the *Parsai* song, the following song is sung at the time of the groom's bath:
chorus: na garje na garke angan cikar kini kipae
1) babe saile da put babe marue da pota nane marue da dohta angan dikar soni kitae .
2) .. mame marue da bhanja.. etc.
chorus: No thunder (and lightning) who has made the courtyard turn into mud ?
1) That son of his father, that grandson of his grandfather, daughter's son of maternal grandmother—he has made the courtyard muddy.
2) .. nephew of maternal uncle, etc.

Groom: O my mother! I will bring a maid to serve you, who is the daughter of that big man — my wife.

As the groom is not supposed to eat from the time of his bath until his marriage, a similar idea of the mother's enduring relationship and the difficulty of separating from it is revealed in the song sung in Sunhet:

kya kuch khada laraya nai dhoi
kya kuch pita taipaie
gur ghyo khada lare nai dhoi
amrit pita taipaie
mau teriya ghyo babaru pakke rakhe kunam lukaie

What all did the freshly washed groom eat?
What all did the thirsty-one drink?
Molasses and wheat was eaten by the freshly washed groom;
The thirsty one drank *amrit* (nectar)
Your mother having hidden some *babrus* (bread made from
wheat and molasses) in a special place.

(11) *Janet*

The departure of the wedding party is timed so that the arrival time will be seven or eight o'clock in the evening. Thc average size of the party is from twenty to sixty persons, and is entirely male (both agnates and affines of the groom). Usually, if the distance is not too far, the whole party walks to its destination, while the bedding is brought on mules. However, nowadays a bus is sometimes rented for long journeys at considerable cost.

At the head of the wedding party (ph—*janet*, Pn—*janjh*, H—*barat*) on the journey is the *patari wala*, a low caste man who is hired to carry the groom's trunk (*patari*). This trunk is always tied in a red scarf, and inside it is the *bara sui* — the groom's clothes and personal effects, as well as the gifts which will be given to the bride. Behind the *patari wala* comes the band. This band plays upon departure and arrival as well as at intervals along the way, especially whenever another hamlet is passed. Following the band is the groom in his *palanquin* carried by four low-caste men, with perhaps an additional four to relieve them if the distance is great.* This *palanquin* is called the *kasa*, and differs from the bride's which is covered by curtains and called *doli*. With the groom in his *kasa* is his quilt (*rasai*), a mirror, and nowadays usually a radio (in some families, a dagger and a coconut are also carried by the groom). With the groom at all times is his younger brother or cousin called the *sabhalara*; it is said that if the groom suddenly dies, this brother will go through the marriage in his place. The rest of the *janet* is in no particular order and is made up of relatives and friends from the village, especially the father and the *mama* who also wear pink turbans, the wedding turban color. In addition, there is always the *kul purohit* and the family barber who play important parts in the marriage ritual.

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* In one marriage where the *janet* went in a bus, the groom rode in our jeep station-wagon. Fortunately, the luggage rack extended in front of the seat, and the *patari* trunk was still able to be kept at the forefront.

The procession does not necessarily travel the shortest distance, for it is necessary to pass the village *takurdvaras* (temples) where the father makes substantial offerings. The destination is a house or area near but separate from the bride's house where arrangements have been made and a certain number of rope beds provided. Usually this is in the local guest house (*sarai*) but may be out in the open. Upon arrival, hot tea and some sweets are provided by the bride's family for the *janet*.

(12) *Gei*

As soon as the groom has been established in the room or place set aside for him, the bride's *purohit* comes and performs the gei *puja*. In this short *puja* the *purohit* uses flowers, tumeric and mantras to invoke the gods in the groom's presence. According to informants, the *gei* is performed to "*shanti* the *devta*" to make the gods "peaceful" or "happy". They state that although this has been done at home, it is necessary to repeat it here in this new location to insure everything goes well. Furthermore, it may be noted that a ritual relationship is established between the groom and the bride's *purohit*, who will be the one to perform the actual marriage.

Following the *puja*, the *purohit* gives a suit of clothes to the groom on behalf of the bride's family, and especially the bride's maternal uncle, who purchased the suit. This suit will be worn following the marriage. It is given through the mediation of the Brahman in order to make it more prestigious and to show more respect to the groom.

(13) *Milni*

The *milni* meaning "meeting" is the ceremony in which the groom's party and the bride's meet each other for the first time. This occurs on an open space between the bride's house and *janet's dehra* (place of encampment), but usually significantly closer to the *dehra* than the bride's house. Both parties line up on opposite sides of the space. The groom's barber then goes to the middle and places a two-foot square piece of cloth on the ground (according to some this should be white, but in fact it was usually red). The most respected representatives from each side, invariably the oldest men of the family, come forward from each side with the *purohits*. These two men meet in the middle and place their right (bare) feet on their half of the cloth. The bride's representative then gives cloth and money to the groom's (*tamol*) and they embrace. Sometimes there is a reciprocal (though lesser) gift as well.

After this meeting, each *purohit* in turn invokes Vishnu and gives a welcoming address sermon in Sanskrit, Hindi, and Pahari. As this is usually the occasion for competition between the two Brahmans, these addresses may be very lengthy and include songs and recitations of stories from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*. When they have finished, both lines come forward and meet each other with *namastes* (hands joined) as well as the more recent practice of the handshake. Among the high caste Rajputs, the additional greeting of *jai dev* ("praise god") is exchanged.

(14) *Tel Telai and Rira*

Following the milni is the *pata* ceremony. In this the groom's *purohit* goes to the *torna* (ritual gate) at the bride's house. Here he gives to the bride's *purohit* the oil that was used on the groom during the *sandh* ceremony, that it may be used for the bride's *sandh* as well (called *tel telai*). In addition, he gives the *rira*, the red shawl (chaddar) that the bride wears and that is used for circumambulation of the fire (*lavan*) and *devta pherna* ceremony. Both of these items symbolize different kinds of bonds between the groom and bride, as will be seen. Thus it is significant that their transference from the groom to the bride takes place through the ritual purity of the Brahmans underneath the sacred *torna* (gate).

After this transaction has been completed, the bride's family serves the *janet* its first meal. These meals may be of two kinds. Generally, if the marriage is to occur that night and the departure the next day, then the most important feast, the *Bhoj* is given. This meal, like the others at the time of marriage, is prepared by a special caste of Brahmans whose business it is to make these meals. The fact that Brahmans prepare the meal makes it the purest possible and in addition to allowing all castes to eat it, indicates that the *janet* (which in Kangra is of a higher sub-caste) is being greeted with respect. The *bhoj* is a meal based on wheat cakes cooked in *ghi* called *svalu* and is unique to Kangra. With the *svalus* are five to six other dishes including vegetables such as cauliflower, potatoes, and lentils, and sweet dishes made from molasses and wheat. At all other meals (including this one if the *janet* is to stay longer), the feast is called *bhat* or *phat*. "*Bhat*" literally means rice, and indicates that it is a rice based meal with a fewer number of the curried dishes mentioned above, as well as curds.

For both *bhojs* and *bhats*, the *janet* is served first in lines on the ground where mats have been placed for sitting. The food is served on leaf plates (*patlu*) made by the women and everyone must start and get up at the same time. The band and the *kasa* carriers are served separately off to one side. Once the *janet* has left (the groom is not present, as he fasts until the next morning), the women are served, and finally the men. Low caste members of the village come to the edge of the courtyard and are there given food to take home and eat.

(15) *Groom's bath*

At the appropriate *murat*, generally in the very early morning, the bride's barber is sent to call the groom. The groom then goes to the bride's house for the first time, riding in his *kasa* and accompanied by several men (usually brothers), the band and the *kul purohit*. The groom then undresses in preparation for this bath, while his *purohit* often takes a bath amid *mantras*. The groom himself must take his bath publicly in the courtyard where a *chonki* (stool) is placed. As most marriages occur in the winter, and it is often very cold at 2 a.m., the bride's family will often provide warm water for this purpose. In addition, the groom is given some curds to wash with. The purpose of this bath was universally said to provide a time when the bride's family could examine the groom's body to see that he had no defects.

Following the bath, the bride's *purohit* dresses the groom in a white *dhoti* (traditional cloth wrap) and red shawl, and places on his finger a ring. All of these articles are from the bride's side and have been purchased by the bride's *mama*. Among Brahmans, the second *janeo* cord is given at this time. Then amidst songs describing the action sung by the women inside the rooms, the groom is led by his new brother-in-law to the *bedi* where the marriage will take place. This is accomplished by tying a red thread to the groom's finger, and leading him by this over the area sprinkled with water by the *purohit*.

Clearly, in addition to the popular explanation given above, this bath serves the purpose of further purifying the groom such that he sheds his suit and dons the ritual *dhoti*, provided for him by his in-laws.

(16) *Lagan*

Both the *lagan* and the *bedi*, the actual marriage ceremonies, are performed within a specially constructed structure called the *bedi*. The *bedi* is a six-foot square skeleton frame made of bamboo, and covered on three sides with an embroidered white sheet. The roof is a pointed pyramid made from eight bamboo poles coming from the four corners and the middle of the four sides. In the past, this entire roof was covered, but presently a red shawl is put there to symbolize a covering. On the top is a simplified wooden peacock, and on the bamboo roof poles are about twenty to thirty wooden parrots. These birds symbolize the birds which attended the wedding of Lord Krisna, and indicate that to a certain degree this wedding is a paradigmatic repetition of that act in which the groom's identity with Vishnu is further substantiated. Suspended across the middle in the centre of the *bedi* is a one-foot square red cloth with perpendicular lines running through it. During the beginning of the *lagan* there is a short *puja* to this cloth (which is also identified with the center pole, or *madalp*). According to the older villagers, its meaning is that this area above the *bedi* is a place consecrated for the *devas* so that they will bless the wedding with their presence, and no evil spirits will come.

The overall symbolism of the *bedi* is found in its name which is also "*vedi*" ("b" and "v" are allophones undistinguished in speech, and often confused in writing). Informants clearly stated that four poles of the *bedi* are the same as the four Vedas — the ancient scriptural source of Hinduism. Thus it is clear that the *bedi* is sacred space surrounded by the four Vedas, and that various symbols have been used to recreate the situation of Krishna's wedding itself.

The *lagan* commences inside the *bedi* without the bride's presence. The groom sits on the west side and some relative of the bride's, such as the bride's paternal grandmother (*parama*) sits on the adjoining south side. For about a half hour, the *purohit* from the bride's side performs *puja* with the groom and bride's representative. Like most other *pujas* this is performed with *drub* grass (gathered from khaval plants) tied in small bundles with red *dhora* (string). This *drub* is dipped in the *lota* containing water or one of the various leaf vessels (*ghuma*). Among other things, these ghuma contain *ast* (rice), *dhup* (incense), *rola tikka* (red tumeric powder taken from the *kamal* tree fruit), and *phul* (small pieces of yellow flowers). The groom and bride's relatives are told by the *purohit* when to sprinkle these ritual items in different directions as the *purohit* reads Sanskrit *mantras*. These *mantras*, in the same manner as in the *Sandh* ceremony, invoke the various gods represented on the design to insure their presence and blessings. Special care is taken that the square of cloth in the middle of the *bedi* is given offerings of grain.

This section is completed with the *madhupark* ritual. *Madhuparka* (S) is a mixture of honey, curds, and *ghi*. In the Sanskritic tradition, it is supposed to be offered by the bride's father (*kanyapita*)as a gesture of respect towards the groom such that the bride's father was even supposed the wash to groom's feet and call him "sir" while the groom commanded him and stated:

> I am the highest one among my peoples as the sun among the thunderbolts. Here I tread on whosever infests me.

Taking the *madhuparka*, he was further supposed to say:

> May speech dwell in my mouth, breath in my nose, sight in my eyes, hearing in my ears, strength in my arms, vigour in my organs. May my limbs be unhurt. May my body be united with my body. (Pandey ; 1969, 212)

Now this formula for the *madhupark* does not appear, and it is now given to the groom by the *purohit*. Local Brahmans give the interpretation that originally the three ingredients were mixed equally and were poisonous to anyone who was not a pure *Brahmacharia* (virgin). They state that as grooms can no longer be trusted to be pure, this test is not administered, and the ingredients are mixed unequally so as not to poison the groom.

After this first half hour, the bride appears, wearing the traditional long red skirt, *kamiz* ("shift" over the skirt), and large red shawl earlier brought by the groom. The other clothes were given by the bride's *mama*. The bride at this point is very nervous and shy, as is shown in the song sung at this time:

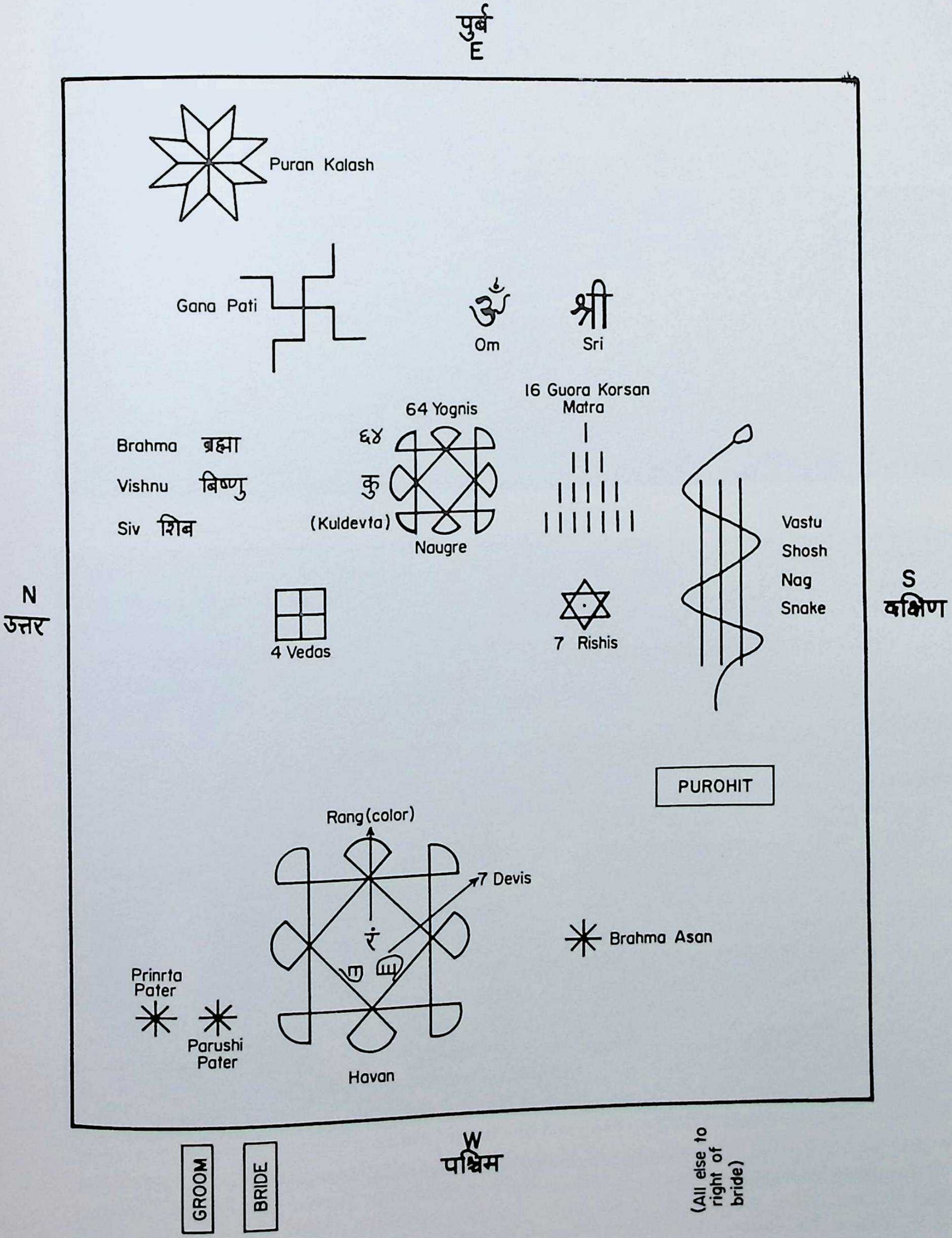
lagan ke samy larki ko bahar lane ka git

jin tu bahar a meri rani rukman
kahn lagna nu aye a.
mai kihan ama maharaj mere
babe de sarmaniyan
tu babe de sarmaniyen meri lagan
bela jandiyan. jandiye te jan de
mai maia goda khlaidiye.
nin tu bahar a meri vali kurukman
kahn lagna nu aye a

Song to take bride outside for the lagan

Groom: You come outside my hesitating queen, please come on out.
Bride: How am I to come, my king, I am shy of my husband
Groom: While you are being shy of your husband, the lagan time is passing
Bride: If it is passing, let it pass, I am staying at my mother's womb.
Groom: No, you come outside my hesitating one, come to the lagan.

The bride is seated to the groom's right, and the *purohit* continues the *puja*. As the bride's face is completely covered by the shawl, she is unable to perform the necessary actions herself, and is helped by a female relative. During this time, special attention is devoted to *Ganapati* (*Ganesh* — god of beginnings and offspring), *Kalas* (water god), and *badam* (almond nuts).


पुर्ब
E
Puran Kalash
Gana Pati
ॐ
Om
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Sri
16 Guora Korsan Matra
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(Kuldevta)
Naugre
Brahma ब्रह्मा
Vishnu बिष्णु
Siv शिब
Vastu
Shosh
Nag
Snake
N
उत्तर
S
दक्षिण
4 Vedas
7 Rishis
PUROHIT
Rang (color)
7 Devis
रं
Brahma Asan
Prinrta Pater
Parushi Pater
Havan
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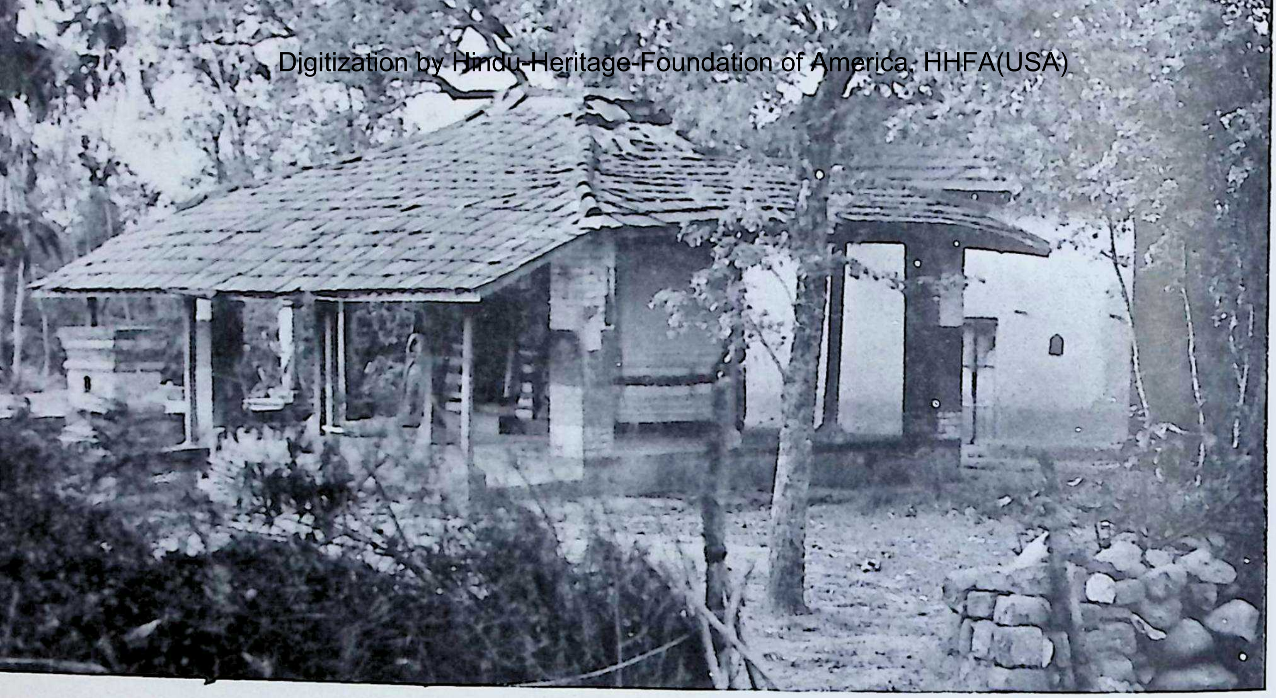


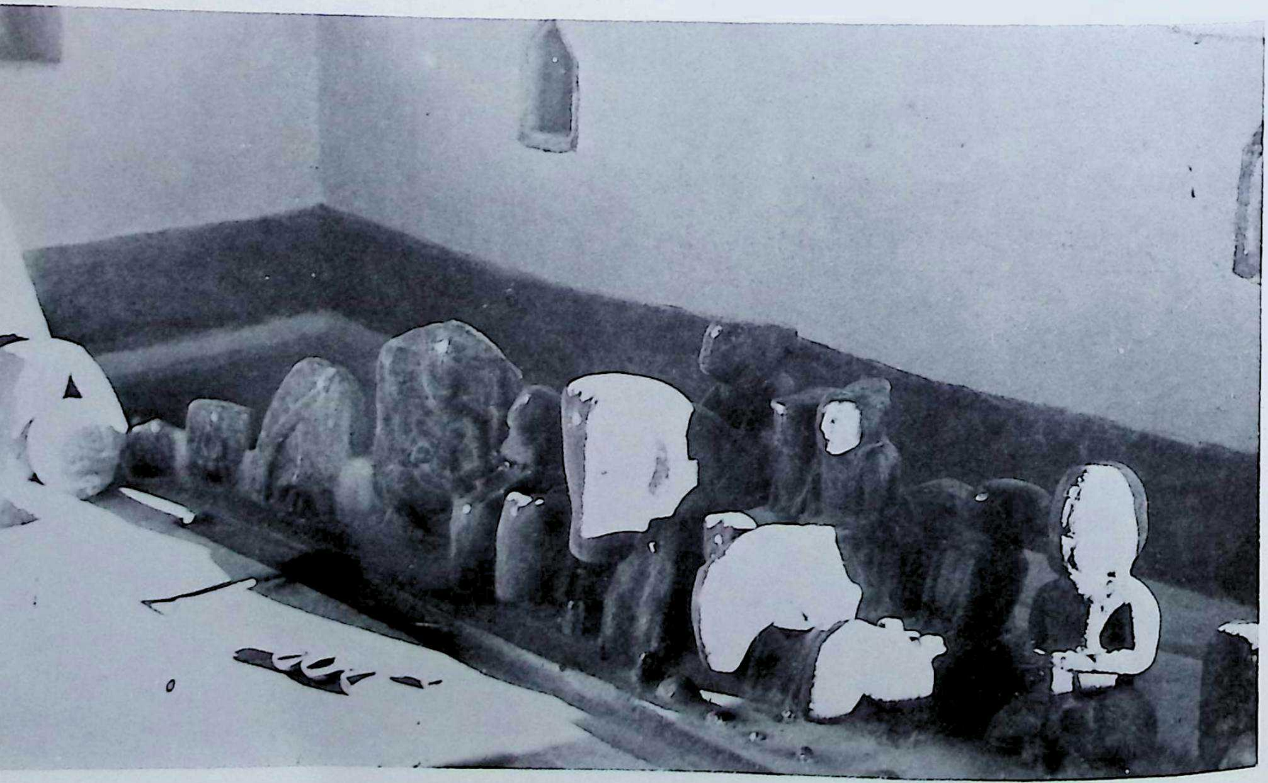


Plate 13 (top). Sunhet Thakurdwara containing images of Radha-Krishna.

Plate 14 (bottom). Sunhet Gugga Temple. In addition to Gugga, his wife, his mother and his sister (all mounted), the figure of Guru Gorakhnath may be seen in meditation on the far right.

Unfortunately my data is not complete enough to examine this part of the *lagan* and follow up the fertility motifs suggested by the ritual articles. However, Hutchinson in the *Chamba Gazetteer* records a more detailed ritual involving the bride's brother which is performed at this time and is of great importance to this analysis. First he mentions the *puja* to the gods represented on the diagram.

> This is followed by placing fried barley in a *chhaj* (sieve) which is brought on to the *baid.* First the bridegroom takes a handful of this grain to put it on three different spots, while the bride's brother keeps wiping it away with his right hand as fast as it is put down. This is repeated but the second time the bride's brother puts the grain down the bridegroom washes it away. This is called *khila khedni* (playing with parched grain) and is done to break the tie of relationship between the contracting parties. After this *khila khedni* the boy's father puts 4 annas into the *chhaj* and the bride's brother takes off the red piece which he has worn on the head during the ceremony and puts it in the *chhaj* too (in Newell: 1965, 54).

For the same part of the *lagan,* Newell records:

> Then the bride's brother comes forward and wets the bride's dress in order to smear some of its red on the bride's white garment. The *purohit* then takes the bride's white garment and knots it to the bridegroom's coat Inside the knot is a coin and a walnut. (Newell: 1965, 52)

At this juncture the relationship of the bride's brother (the future *mama*) to items and actions with clear relation to fertility is merely noted, as a broader analysis will be found later.

The last part of the *lagan* is a ceremony locally called *mu drsta* (face sight). As the name indicates, this is the occasion for the groom's first sight of the bride. Female relations maneuver the bride's shawl over both of their heads so they cannot be seen by anyone else, and the bride and groom are given a brief glimpse of each other.

(17) *Bedi*

During the break between the *lagan* and the *bedi* (usually about fifteen minutes) a *rira,* a cocoanut, a *rupee*, and one *badam* (nut) is taken by a couple of the members of the *janet* back to the groom's home . It is considered inauspicious if they do not reach there before sunrise, and thus they travel very fast. It is unclear what is intended by this. There is a distinct possibility that it symbolizes marriage-by-capture, for although it is doubtful whether this was ever prevalent in Kangra, many people referred to it as the marriage custom of the distant past and it is definitely present as an idea which is given considerable credence.

For the *bedi* ceremony, the same positions are occupied by the bride and the groom except that the groom has changed into his suit and put on his *sehra* (during the *lagan* he remained with "naked head"). The *purohit* lights the havan made from *mango* wood (*samatan*) with appropriate *mantras* and *ghi*, incense, and tumeric. Then, as more *ghi* is given to the fire by the *purohit*, bride, and groom, the *purohit* reads the various wedding duties as recorded in the Shastras and invokes the gods.

(18) *Lavan*

As a part of the *bedi*, the *lavan* is yet considered a separate act in which the act of marriage itself takes place. These *lavan* (H.=*phere*; S.=*agni-pradaksina*) are the circumambulations of the *havan* fire. Shastric sources state that there should be seven of these, and although even some Kangra residents are of this opinion, invariably only four rounds are actually made. For the *lavan*, the bride's smaller red shawl (*rira*) is attached to her clothes and then either thrown over the groom's shoulder, or actually tied to his clothes as well. Before each round, both the groom and bride are given some puffed rice, and after the appropriate Sanskrit *mantra*, they throw this into a fire saying *om svaha*. Then the bride crosses in front of the groom and leads the clockwise circumambulation around the *havan* inside the *bedi*, being helped along by two women stationed at either side. Halfway around, the groom steps ahead and places his right hand palm upwards on the bride's covered forehead while the *purohit* reads a vow in Sanskrit. The bride then continues to lead the way until they reach their places and the whole procedure from the puffed rice onwards is repeated. Each circumambulation is termed *lavan;* the connection between the bride and groom established by the cloth *rira* is called *linjari*. After the last (fourth) *lavan*, the *purohit* gives the bride's hand to the groom, and the couple is considered married.

The giving of the hand (S.=*panigrahana*) is a shortened form of the shastric ritual termed *kanyadan* or "daughter-gift". It refers to the fact that the daughter is given as a meritorious gift (*dan*) to the groom, and in theoretical form, is done by the bride's father himself, saying:

> For the obtainment of absolute happiness, as the consequence of *kanyadana*, for our forefathers; for purifying my twelve preceeding and twelve succeeding generations through the progeny born in this girl; and for the propitiation of Laksmi and Narayana etc., I make this gift. I give away this girl adorned with gold ornaments to you Vishnu, with the desire of conquering the world of Brahma. The Nourisher of the whole universe, all creatures and gods are witness to the fact that I make gift of this girl for the salvation of my forefathers. (Pandey: 1969, 215)

The same notion of the extreme value of this *dan* is expressed in a song sung in the Simla hill area:

> Why are you trembling O mother of the girl
> Today on the occasion of dharma?
> Why are you trembling O father of the girl
> Today on the occasion of dharma ?
> Other *dans* are held frequently —
> Daughter's *dan* is held today;
> The dan of elephants and horses are held frequently —
> Daughter's *dan* is held only today. Ganga
> Ashnan (bathing in Ganges) are done frequently —

Daughter's *dan* is held only today.
(Basal: 1961, 25)

In Sunhet, the following songs concerning the *kanya dan* are sung:

sade babe de pachvare hare do vans cule
tusi kio laina hai dan kiya laini ji dasna
ik babe di dhio kuari ohi laina dan ohi laina ji dasna
sade tae de pachbare hare do vans cule, etc.

For the sake of our father's preceeding two generations,
In what form are you taking the dan, in what form
A virgin daughter of her father, that is to be taken
In *dan*, and that in *dasna*,
(etc. with other relatives)

kuri dea bao tu bahre ji a
dar vic tal tal vic naha (repeat)
resmi dhoti tu ang laga (repeat)
sone janeo tu gal vic pa (repeat)
kuri dea caca tu bahre ji a, etc.

Father, please come outside to give the girl,
In the door (?) In the pond, bathe (repeat)
Put on a silk *dhoti* over your limbs (repeat)
Put on a gold *janeo* on your throat. (repeat)
Uncle, please come outside to give the girl, etc.

Following the *kanyadan*, the bride and groom change places so that the bride is now on the groom's left, and reseat themselves. The women in the bride's household and other close relatives then come forward to the *bedi* and offer their gifts of *klira* to the bride. These *klira* are composed of sea shells (*kodiyan*), half of a coconut (*narel*), and one rupee strung together on a red *dhora* (string). These are offered to the bride by tying them around her wrists. The last *klira* to be given, usually by the mother, is generally made of silver shaped into shells.

The *bedi* is then completed with the final reading of the seven vows or admonitions. Before each vow is read by the *purohit*, the groom knocks an almond which has been placed on a pile of red *dhora* (string) on a board with seven stripes off the board. This corresponds to the traditional shastric rite of the *saptapada* or "seven steps", in which a step is taken for each of the vows. These vows concern the maintaining of the family's traditions, honoring and respecting each other, and maintaining purity. In the seventh vow, the bride says (in effect), "I will take half of what we have and sit on your left side (i.e. do whatever you tell me). But although I will take half of your *pun* (merit), I will have no part of your *pap* (sins)". To this the groom responds, "I, in turn, will not make you my shoes, but my *wazir* (first minister). But you should look at no others (i.e. remain faithful) and always serve me." These vows complete the *lagan-bedi*; firecrackers are set off and the band plays.

The central ritual action of this ceremony has been the circumambulation of the *havan*, the fire. Kangra Rajputs are agreed that it is this act which constitutes the actual marriage, a notion further substantiated by the fact that in the *janjhara* type of marriage mentioned previously, the whole ritual is constituted by circumambulating a bush which has been set on fire. However, the "logic" or "meaning" of this act is not at once clear to the observer. There appear to be meanings isolatable on several levels which can to some degree be correlated here. Nevertheless, the question must be left partially open, although the death rituals will help us to further understand its meaning.

In the shastric sources, which in this case are identical to the *mantras* read by the Kangra *purohit*, the groom goes around the fire seven times, reciting the following *mantra:*

> om tubhyamagreparyyavahansuryan yahatuna saha punah patibhyo javanda aganayeprajaya saheti (*Vivaha Paddhati:* 85)
>
> To you they have in the beginning carried round Surya with the bridal procession. May you give back, O Agni, to the husbands, the wife together with offspring.

According to Panday (1969: 127), this idea that *Agni* must give back the bride with offspring derives from the notion that man is the fourth husband, or lord (*pati*, S., carries both denotations). The first is the god *Soma* who presides over physical growth; the next the *Gandharva*, who preside over the development of her breasts and good manners. The third *pati* is *Agni*:

> Who is Agni ? He is the Lord of Fire .... Agni is fructifier. It is he who brings about the menstrual flow, and woman can then bear children. Agni then gives her to man; her fourth Pati or Lord. (Pandey: 1969, 217)

In these texts, then, Agni or the fire is understood as the god who brings the bride to maturity and is responsible for her fertility. The circumambulations serve to sever this "marriage" and form the bond for the new fertile one with man.

Leaving the shastric sources, we find that *Agni* is understood by the Kangra people as the witness (*sakshi*), the sacred legitimizing force. *Agni* is the messenger; he is often conceived as the mediating force between the gods and man. This is evident even from the construction of the *bedi*, where a place for the gods is hung up directly over where the *havan* is lit —the place to which the smoke rises. The bond between the bride and groom is found in the *linjari*, the red cloth which connects them. But this bond only obtains permanent (*dharmic*) significance through the circumambulations of *Agni*.

The correlation between this meaning and the shastric one can be seen in several symbols. The red of the bride's dress, as well as the red of the cloth bond (the *linjari*) correspond to *Agni's* color, which is also considered to be red. It is highly probable that in this situation, that redness refers to blood, sepecifically, menstrual blood and the blood accompanying the bride's first intercourse. According to the previous text, it is precisely Agni who has presided over the formation of this blood which signifies fertility. The offerings of white rice (into the red fire) at each round further complement this notion of white purity turned into red fertility, for *Agni's* characteristics can be seen to be contradictorily purifying and fertilizing.

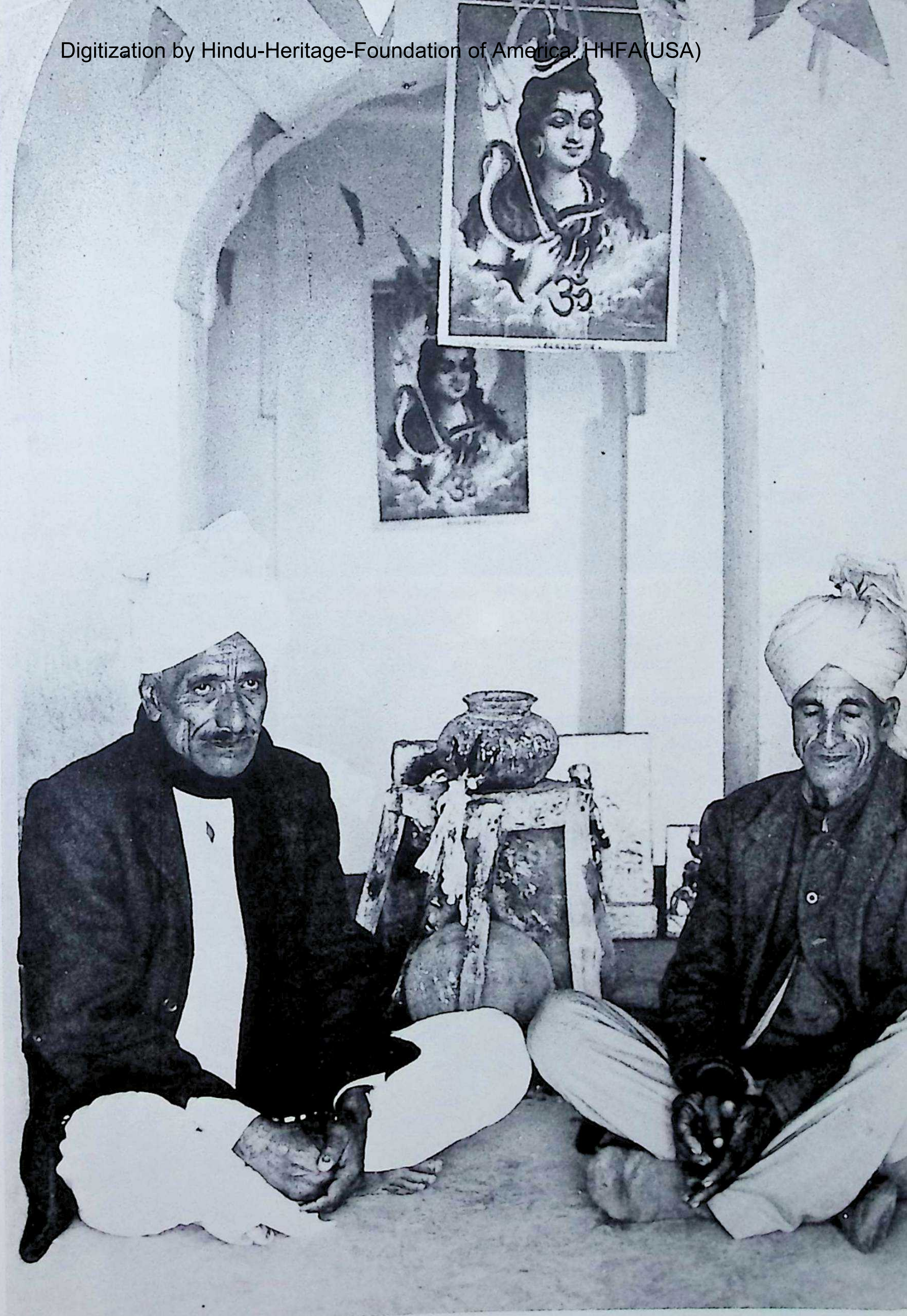
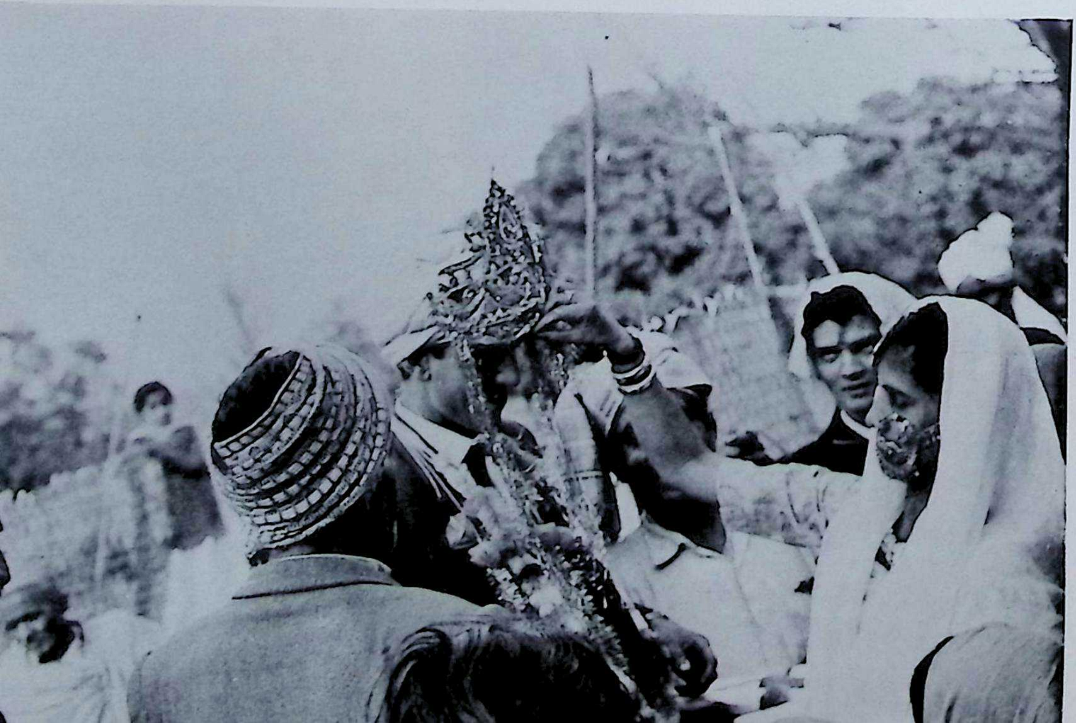


Plate 15. Two Rajputs sit beside excavated Siva Lingam at Chinyari under a Picture of Siva.

Plate 16. The suratra ceremony for the groom.

Plate 17. A sister places the tika mark on the groom's forehead during the tamol ceremony. Note the groom's sehra crown.



The clockwise circumambulation itself is a repetition of the auspicious movement of the sun invoked in the Sanskrit *mantra* as *Surya,* the sun god. The fact that the *bedi* ceremony must be performed at night throughout India, coupled with references cited earlier, strongly suggest that the groom himself symbolically represents Vishnu and Surya, the sun. Were the ritual to be held in the daytime,there might be the contradiction of the sun itself.

As a further correlation (which is also of importance in the kinship sphere) there is the fact that until the *lavan* (circumambulations) the bride is given ritual priority and superiority to the groom. She sits on his right side and she leads the circumambulations of the fire. It is not until after the *lavan* that she becomes in a significant sense subordinate to the groom, and is seated on his left in a position of inferiority. Thus it is only after *Agni* gives the bride to the groom that he has any sort of social or ritual rights over the bride. In this connection it may also be noted that in many transition rites as set out by van Gennep and followed up by Turner, there is a reversal of roles in which the high are made low, the king-to-be the slave, etc. This is clearly in evidence here in the reversal of the male-female roles of dominance and submission in which the transition itself is accomplished during the reversal.

The *klira* gifts from the bride's female relatives accomplish, through different ritual presentations, the kinship separation which in the groom's case occurs through the *tamol* gifts. In fact, these gifts are symbols of a personal separation which has actually ocurred during the *lavan*. This is demonstrated in the song sung at Rampur at this time, where they do seven rounds instead of four :

Here she takes the first round,
Her grandfather's granddaughter
Here she takes the second round,
Her maternal uncle's maternal niece.
Here she takes the third round,
Her father's elder brother's daughter.
Here she takes the fourth round
Her father's own daughter.
Here she takes the fifth round,
Her father's younger brother's niece.
Here she takes the sixth round,
Her brother's sister.
Here she takes the seventh round
And lo ! the darling becomes alien.*

---

* The difference between seven or four rounds is, I think, based on regional differences. Specifically, I suspect that four rounds are made in areas where the groom and bride are also identified with Siva and his consort, Parvati or Gauri, an identification which becomes clearer later. This conclusion I have gathered from the following song sung in Chamba: In the first round go the bachelors/ In the second round go Ishwar and Gauraji/ In the third round they let the *anjan* (cloth between them) drag on the ground/ In the fourth round (the bridegroom) broke it and ran. As I have not yet located the Siva myth I assume this is derived from, this conclusion must remain hypothetical.

However, the composition of the "separation gifts" (the *klira* shells) themselves are of importance and meaning. I am unable to gather any meanings for the sea shell, but I suspect that the hemisphere of the coconut has its usual sexual connotations as elsewhere in India (the hemispheres are strung so that they open downwards, like the womb).

(19) *Sirgundi*

On the day following the *bedi*, the bride's family presents a *bhat* (rice feast) in which the groom is now the honored guest. He is seated under the *bedi* with his brothers and his leaf plate is filled with vast quantities of food to show the host's abundance. Of this the groom is supposed to eat very little to show his own moderation. As in the feast the previous night, the women sit in a room adjoining the courtyard and sing. In the prior feast the songs were respectful, i. e. "we have given them mats to sit on, but they deserve chairs" and "we have given them leaf plates, but they deserve silver ones." However, during this feast following the *lagan-bedi*, the songs become joking and disrespectful. For example, the women sing, "we have given them the best quality basmati rice, and they have eaten like bulls—see how much they are costing us."

This joking and disrespect shown to the groom and his party by the bride's female relations is continued in the *sirgundi* ("hair combing") ceremony which occurs about an hour after the feast. For the *sirgundi,* the groom is taken into the women's chamber where they have all assembled with the bride. Here, the bride's hair is combed in his presence, and black hairpins as well as the red henna stain is put in the part of her hair. This red coloring in the woman's part is only worn by married women. Once again, this may very well refer to the blood of intercourse and childbirth, which occurs when the pubic hair is parted. The groom is teased unmercifully by the women and they sing degrading songs about him. One such song is reproduced below, but the translation is highly tentative and includes some guesswork, although its tone is clear.

sirgundi

murkh ni murkh maye murkh de lar lai ni
bhojiya the kangia karan sikdiyan cug liaya ni
murkh ni murkh maye murkh de lar lai ni
bhojiya the doriya karan rasdiyan bat lipi ni

sirgundi

Fool, you fool, you fraudulent idiot to be fought with;
O one who has eaten, do the combing, pick up the door latch with your beak;
Fool, you fool you fraudulent idiot to be fought with;
O one who has eaten put in a nose ring, and then twist the string.

At some point in the ceremony, the bride's mother feeds a little food first to the bride and then to the groom. The couple is then required to reach over and take the food out of the other's mouth and eat it themselves (quite possibly referring to the mixing of seeds in intercourse). Since the bride has been served first, her food has been chewed and mixed with saliva to a greater degree than the groom's when the exchange is made. Thus, this is considered to be both humiliating and, in normal circumstances, polluting to the groom. Along the same line, Lewis records similar actions in his village of Rampur:

> Needles may be stuck in the wall so that when the groom places his palm there, he will get hurt. The women may push and strike the groom with their fists. He is expected to hit back. The women try to make the groom eat henna and offer worship to a winnowing basket. (Lewis: 1968, 182)

All of these rites are in direct opposition to notions of purity, role relationships, and social propriety. The groom is polluted by being in the same room as the hair combing, by putting the bride's food and saliva into his mouth. Roles in Hindu society are reversed: the groom is at the mercy of women who must ordinarily maintain their distance and show him respect; the groom is forced to eat the bride's food, and to eat second, whereas ordinarily he is served first, and the bride is expected to eat what he leaves. He is at the mercy of the women physically, and attempts are made to make him into a fool by forcing him to worship an object that is unworthy (sometimes, even polluting) of worship.

Without going into a family and kinship analysis which is beyond the scope of this study, it may certainly be speculated that the role reversals express opposition and tension in Kangra (and elsewhere) society between male and female in much the same way festivals which remove restrictions allow for the therapeutic expression of emotions and problems. On the ritual level, this reversal can also be seen as facilitating the transition for the bride from her father's house to her groom's house; and for the groom from Vishnu (ritual purity) to householder (normal status). Lewis notes the underlying opposition between the bride's position in her own house and in her groom's house in the former transition when he states that:

> There is at least an undertone of stereotyped abuse or insult in their comments about the female members of the family. (Lewis: 1968, 182)

The latter (groom's) transition can be seen as, following the initial step of eating, the initiation of the process of "reaggregation" — of "depurifying" himself back into society through polluting actions.

(20) *Janet's return*

Prior to the marriage party's departure, the dowry is sent off by men from the bride's side so that it will reach the groom's house before her arrival. This dowry (*daz*, U.=*dahez*) had previously been displayed before the *janet* during the feast. In the past this dowry always included a cow or milk buffalo, but presently, this is rare. A sample dowry of a fairly well-off Rajput now a days is likely to include: a sewing machine, a radio, 2 beds, clothes of the bride, cooking pots and pans, serving dishes (*thalis*), a tea set, and various decorative pictures. In one case of a retired Rajput general's daughter, the bride's dowry is known to have included a car — but needless to say, that has been the only case of its kind.

The ceremony for the departure of the bride (*janet vida karni*) occurs in the same afternoon. For it, the bride's *purohit* reads *mantars* while the women usher the bride to the threshhold of the house. From there the bride is carried by her *mama* (maternal uncle) and placed in her palanquin (*doli*). The bride and all the women weep, as she is carried in front of the groom to the *dehra* where the marriage party is located. Here, the bride's male relatives take leave of the bride and each presents her with some money which is called *badha* (the ceremony is called *badhava*). The bride at this point always weeps very loudly, and the occasion is very moving for the bride's fathers and brothers who also weep. Occasionally, the bride's father may even give a speech at this time. The emotional intensity of the occasion has been expressed in a number of songs, as the only person to accompany the bride is her younger brother. The clearest of these songs is found in Mahasu District :

> Your mother has invoked peace and
> Your father has celebrated your marriage,
> O daughter, proceed to your new house now.
> Give me everything in dowry, Mother.
> People may taunt me;
> I have to go far, across the Ganges
> Give me cattle also, O Mother
> My sister-in-law may taunt me
> Give me charka and tuni, also, O Mother
> My mother-in-law may taunt me.
> Your daugther has to go far to an unknown place, O Father
> Mother is weeping bittterly;
> She has given a word of advice.
> Maternal uncle is weeping bitterly.
> Brother is going with me.
> Your beloved daughter has to go far to an unknown place.
> (Basal: 1961, 26)

As in the *sirgundi* ceremony, this song reveals the tension underlying the girl's position in her own house, and in the in-law's house she is about to go to, as well as the loss suffered by the male members of the family. The bride has been given as meritorius *dan*, but at this point of departure, the virtue in this is sometimes overwhelmed by the sheer loss of a daughter — as shown in a particularly revealing verse from Rampur:

> O darling ! Who wins and who loses ?
> My grandfather loses and my grandfather-in-law wins.
> My father loses and my father-in-law wins.
> (Lewis: 1968, 184)

To a lesser extent, these same emotions and ideas are expressed in the song sung in Sunhet at this time:

> bhariyan patariyan hoian teariyan

aj chodi jamna babe ji da desh e
age do caldi piche muri dekhdi
badda sahamna babe ji da desh e
badda sahamna cace ji da desh e

Big trunks (of dowry) are being made ready,
Today my father's country will be left behind.
Ahead two (men or trunks) are going,
Behind, everyone (?) is looking:
Much stuff (dowry) from my father's country,
Much stuff from my uncle's country.

badhava
barsin badhavrea barsin bhaiae
barsin mere babe ji den khet
meri maia ji den pet badhava mera rang rasiya e
barsin badhavrea barsin bhaia e
barsin mere tae jide khet
meri taiya ji de pet badhave mera ran rasia e

Good-bye badhava (time),good-bye brothers,
Good-bye my father's fields,
My mother's stomach, my color is beautiful (?)
Good-bye badhava, good-bye brothers
Good-bye my uncle's fields, my
Paternal aunt's stomach.

dole da git
hil ve dolea hil ve
sade babe dain angne hil ve
dole dain upar ciriyan isa naini dain kuchdra kuriyan
dhaga tan badha si una da sanu dolna aya pun da

Song of the Doli (Palanquin)
Gently moving doli, gently moving;
Our father's courtyard is moving;
Over the doli are birds, inside the embroidered cloth the girl;
From the gift of the wool thread
To us has come the meritorious doll.

(21) *Andara*

Contrary to other parts of India, the bride is carried ahead of the groom during the marriage party's journey home. This is considered of great importance. In the marriage in which we provided a jeep station wagon and the *janet* travelled in a bus, this fact presented problems of ritual protocol. For it would be as incorect to put the bride and her brother on the front seats next to the American bachelor as on the back seat next to the groom. Ultimately the problem was referred to the headman and he decided that if the bride and her brother were to sit in the back but on the groom's right side, the proper order would still be maintained.

Upon arrival at the groom's house, the bride remains within her *doli* until the proper astrological *murat* has arrived. At the correct time, the *purohit* does a short *puja* on the ground next to the *doli* with Sanskrit *mantras* and leaf cups full of ground wheat (*atta*) . Then the women of the family take the bride out of her palanquin, and the groom's sisters receive some cash gifts from the bride. The bride's brother ties the end of a long red *dhora* (string) onto the bride's shawl. Taking the other end, the groom's family *purohit* circles the *dhora* around the whole group — the bride, her brother, the groom, his father, and the groom's sisters, so that a full circle is formed. Together the group advances to the door,where the bride is met by the groom's mother on the threshold. Here, the mother performs *arti* in front of the bride — worshipping her with lighted lamps placed on candlestick-type construction made out of wheat dough which are circled around her head (*uaranda*). She also does a brief *arti* to her son. The whole party then enters the house, and the *purohit* conducts a short *puja* to the *kul devta*, Ganesh, and Kalash.

The seemingly universal practice of giving the groom's sisters money gifts is further expanded in Rampur:

> As the couple approaches the house, the groom's sister blocks the way and will not allow the bride inside until she or the groom hand over some money. However, this does not imply any debasement of the bride. (Lewis: 1968, 185)

This action sheds light on the conflict between the bride and her in-laws from the point of view of the groom's sister and appears to indicate that the sister feels that she is losing certain rights over her brother to the bride for which she must be paid.

As the bride's first entrance to her future home is clearly of great significance, the *purohit's puja* to the ground she steps on, the waiting for the exact *murat*, and the *puja* to the *kul devta*, Ganesh (the god of beginnings), and Kalash, are all intended to insure that the entrance is auspicious and pleasing to the gods. The red *dhora* serves to circle the new kinship group, and unite within its sacred space the new kin relations. The fact that the mother does *arti* to her future daughter-in-law is once again a reversal of normal roles in which the daughter-in-law must worship the mother's feet whenever returning home, and attests to the ritually exaulted position (and purity) of the bride who is both *dan*, and who was so recently identified with Krisna's consort and Gaura, Siva's consort. The use of the ritual item of wheat (both as dry flour and kneaded dough) would seem to provide an undercurrent of fertility symbolism which simultaneously refers to prosperity.

(22) *Guna Khedan*

Following the *puja* in the *andara* ("going inside") ceremony the *guna khedan* "playing with *gunas*" ceremony is held. In this the bride and her new relations give each other reciprocal gifts of *gunas*, round cakes made from whole wheat flour and molasses. Everyone who receives *gunas* from the bride must also reciprocate with some money, from Rs. 1– Rs. 10. Unfortunately, I am not sure whether the bride may eat the *gunas* she receives, for I was told that the bride fasted until the *gotar malana* ceremony which is held the next morning. This ceremony is also called *mu dikhana*, for whenever any woman gives the bride her *gunas* and cash in return for the bride's *guna*, the bride must lift the shawl from her face and show her new in-law her face.

In Rampur at this time the following actions occur :

> A younger brother or nephew of the husband sits in the lap of the bride and says, "Give me a *laddu*, and God may give you a son." The bride gives him a *laddu* and then pushes him away. (Lewis: 1968, 186)

A *laddu* is a round sweet made out of grains and butter which, although different from a *guna*, is similar in shape, size, and composition. This suggests, on a rather tenuous basis, that the same fertility motif may be present in the Kangra version of the ceremonial acceptance of the new bride. This suggestion is given further credence by the song which is sung in Chamba at this time (as Kangra is directly between Chamba and Rampur) :

> What girl has come to worship a pomegranate tree ? It is Gaura (Siva's consort) who has come to worship. Worshipping the tree, she is asking for a son. (Newell: 1965, 57)

(23) *Gotar Malana*

The *gotar malana* or "mixing of the *gotras*" is held the following morning. Usually a *havan* is lit and a *puja* performed by the *purohit*. Following this the groom's mother gives the bride, who is standing on a raised platform, some *khir* (rice cooked with milk and sugar), and the bride is considered to have joined the groom's *gotra*, although pollution customs following a death in her natal home indicate that she does not lose her rights in her previous *gotra*.

In Chamba this ritual is conducted along more classical lines right before the *laganbedi*, when the bride's father says, in Sanskrit, "*asmat kania tasmat gotra*", or "our daughter to your gotra". The groom's father then responds, "*tasmat kania, asmat gotra*", "your daughter to our gotra", and the affair is completed.

(24) *Suratra*

The afternoon on the day after the *janet's* return, the family barber sets up three beds in the courtyard forming a square with one side open and facing the *sandh* room. Over each bed is placed a blanket, so that an enclosed square is formed. In side this, the groom bathes for the "first time" since the wedding in a ceremony called the *suratra*. This ceremony is not reported for any other area, and as my own data is not complete enough, it is difficult to fully understand its meaning. The name itself is an enigma, for the prefix *su* means "good" or "beautiful" while *ratra* means "night"— while the ceremony itself is held in the early afternoon. There is a vague possibility that it derives from the Sanskrit ceremony of *triratravrata*, three nights in which the bride and groom refrain from intercourse and strong foods, but the connection is doubtful. At this point, then, it is only possible to point to the emphasis villagers laid on the fact that it is the new husband's first bath as a husband (householder).

(25) *Devte Phirne*

Devte phirne refers to the going around to all the local *devtas* for *puja* in the afternoon after *suratra*. For this event, the bride and groom, accompanied by the *purohit*, the groom's father, and all of the groom's female relations, go to each of the main *devtas* within the area, offer *puja* appropriate to each and circumambulate three times. In the *puja* the *devta's* acceptance of the new couple (the bride, and the boy turned householder) is sought. Depending on the area, *Babe Deot Sidh*, *Paharia baba*, a *sati* and a *Pipal* tree are typically worshipped. This locates the bride within her new village's sacred geography,and helps to insure prosperity and progeny. The bride no longer wears her red wedding dress, but is clothed in a new yellow-gold *silver kurta* (pants and shift-dress).

(26) *Dharan Da Puja*

Following the *devte phirne* the party goes to a *dharan* tree (or if that is unavailable, a mango tree) where a short *puja* is performed. Then everyone sits beneath the tree and the wrist *kanganas* (red threads tied at the *sandhi* ceremonies) are opened. The boy chosen to open the groom's becomes his *dhram bhai* (brother through *dharma*); while the girl who opens the bride's likewise becomes her *dharm bahn* (sister). After opening the *kangana* the future *dharm bhai* gives the groom *ghi* and molasses to the groom three times with *tamol* (the ritual gift of cloth and money). The groom reciprocates, and they then embrace as brothers. The same procedure is then followed between the bride and her *dharmbahn* — usually chosen by the groom as the bride knows no one at her new house. This ritual clearly helps to reduce the tension in the bride between her home and her in-laws by establishing a sister in her new house. This new sister can be seen as a mediation between the opposition presented by the two homes.

(27) *Muklava*

After two to three days at the groom's house, the bride, the bride's brother, and the groom return to the bride's house. For this return the bride rides in a *doli*, but the groom walks. The doli here does not have ritual so much as social significance — for in Muslim times all women travelled in a *palanquin* so that they could not be seen. During the time of child-marriaqe, the bride must remain in her home for a year or more, but presently, the bride returns again to the groom's house after only a couple of days of residence in her father's house. This second journey is referred to as the *muklava*, but there are no ceremonial observances attached to it. Following the muklava, the bride and groom are free to have intercourse. Whether or not this custom grew up around the practice of child marriage following the Mogul invasions of Northern India, it is noteworthy that a prescribed period of abstinence (three nights in the *triratravarta*) are nevertheless observed. Personally, I suspect that the *muklava* was observed even prior to the practice of child-marriage as suggested by the *shastras* (Pandey: 1969: 222), perhaps in part to allow for the return

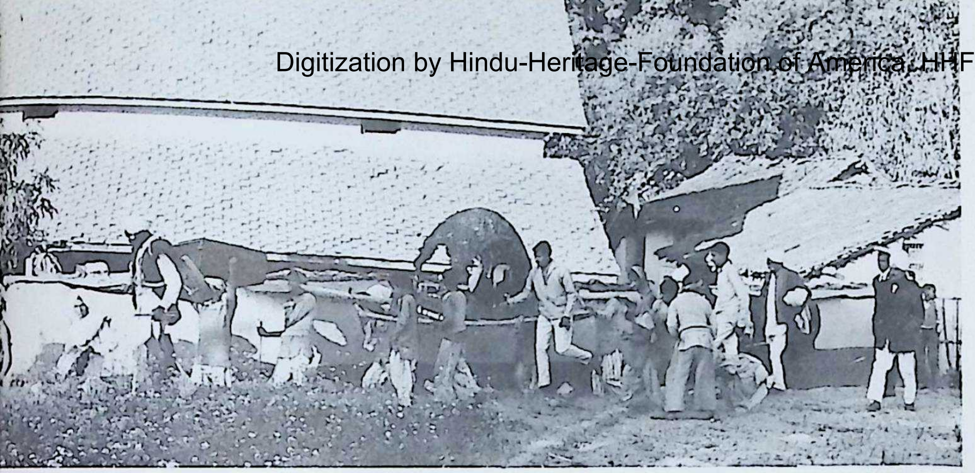
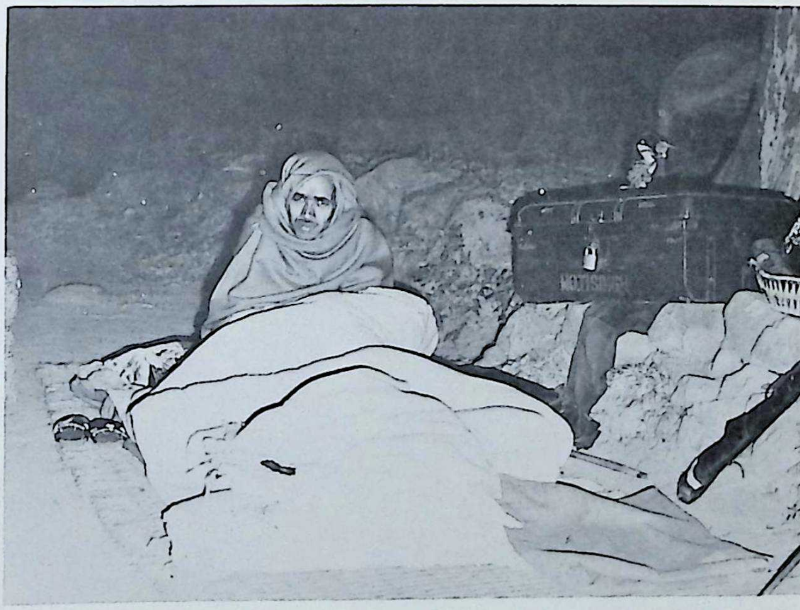


Plate 18. Marriage party (janet) in route to bride's house. Note bara sui trunk in front of groom's palanquin.

Plate 19. Groom at midnight prior to actual marriage with bara sui trunk and sehra crown placed beside him. Gun reflects Rajput military and hunting traditions.



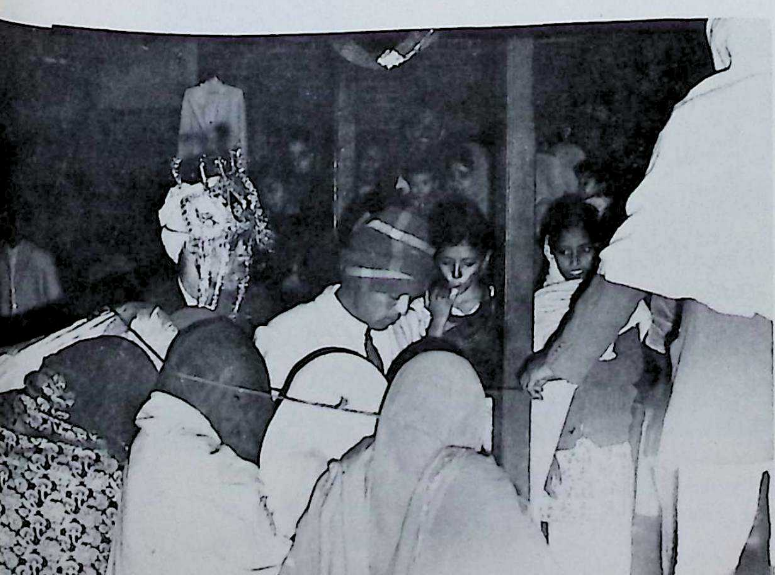


Plate 20. The Brahman Purohit performs the andara ceremony in which the new kin are tied in a circle of string and taken into the groom's house.

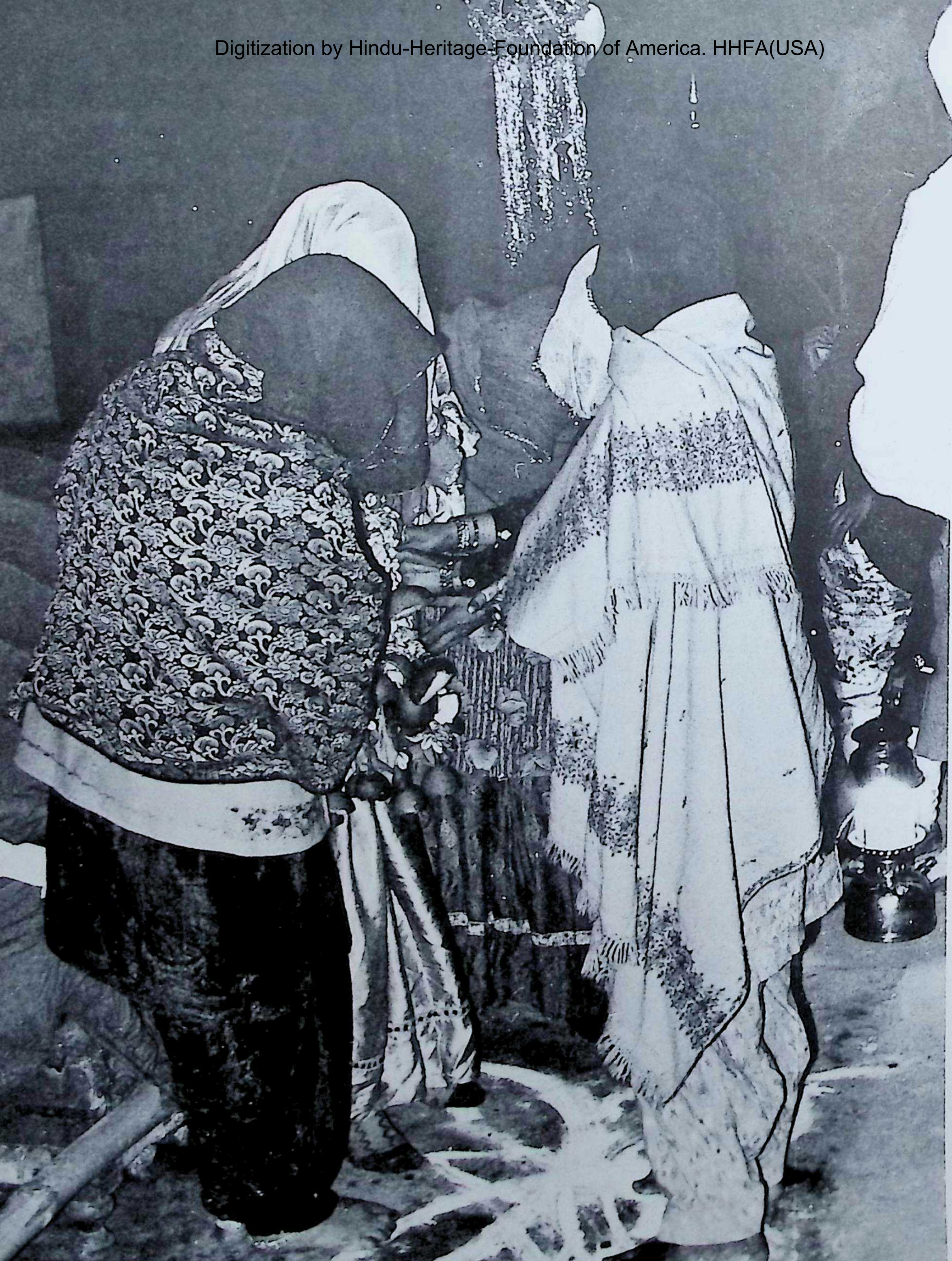


Plate 21. The bride is welcomed by the groom's sisters at the appointed time and location. Note the klira half coconut shells hanging from the bride's wrists.

to normal ritual status prior to the polluting act of sexual intercourse.

(28) *Troza*

After several months, the bride again returns to her home alone where she may remain for several months. Her third journey to the groom's house (the last ceremonial one) is called *troza* (deriving from *tre*, "three") and is also made according to the proper *murats*. Both the *muklava* and the *troza* serve to make the transition between homes more gradual for the bride.

(29) *Gidha*

The *gidha* is not a mariage ceremony as such. Rather, it refers to the night after the *janet* has left for the bride's house, prior to the actual marriage. At this time all the women get together and seclude themselves within a courtyard or inside a house and spend the night in celebratory songs and dancing. This is the only time that women dance or hold such a long celebration just amongst themselves. As this is a completely female event, there are a number of songs associated with the occasion. Reproduced below are three that are sung in Sunhet.

1) tun nac tun nac lare di mai pahli phrati teriye
je tere pale päisa nahin tan ghagre di vel kraide ni
tun nac tun nac lare di tai pahli phrati teri ni; etc.

You dance, you dance, O groom's mother,
The first movement is yours;
If you do not have any money,
Then use the cloth for a skirt;
You dance, you dance, O groom's paternal uncle's wife,
The first movement is yours.
etc. with other relatives

2) Kalea piche hat nasa tainu bhang da
ni goriye na kar ghuman gore rang da
sahb di koti het hatti si halvai di
kalea duna laia de kale kand da
sahb di koti het hatti si moci di
kalea sainral lia de kale rang de
ni goriye na kar ghuman gore rang da

O singer, get behind —
To you is the intoxication of marijuana;
O white-one, don't do the spinning dance, of the white color ;
Beneath the sahib's house is the confectioner's hut,
O singer, bring some sweets (?) made from black sugar;
Beneath the sahib's house is the cobbler's hut,

O singer, bring some of the black color.
O white-one, don't do the spinning dance, of the white color.

3) mae ni sun sadie mae
mate pakai de mai saoriyan den jana
sado mereyan gharan mai saoriyan den jana
kandha ve sun meriyan kandha meriya
cuk meri gatri maisaoriya den jana
sasu ni sun sadiye sasu mainu doli vicon
kar lai mai naoi saoe ai
jatanien ni sun sadiye jataniye tu jete
nu samjhai lai mai nai saoi ai
kandha ve sun sadiyan dandha
asha manja chor de mai nai saoi ai

O mother, our mother, listen
Cook some sweets, for I am going to the in-laws (the bride's);
Shout, my friends (?), for I am going to the in-laws;
O husband, my husband, listen,
Lift my bundle, for I am going to the in-laws (i.e. for wedding)
O father-in-law, our father-in-law, listen
Put me inside the doli, for I am coming to sleep;
O nephew, our nephew, listen
Explain to husband's elder brother (your father)
I am coming to sleep;
O husband, our husband, listen.,
Leave half of the bed, for I am coming to sleep.
(this song refers to the women's desire to go on the wedding party)

EXCHANGES

Economically, the marriage *samskara* is the occasion of considerable expense for both sides, although especially for the bride's side. The average cost to the bride's family of a Rajput wedding is from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 7,000, often considerably above a combined family's yearly income . In fact, the exorbitant cost of weddings which are likely to place a family of daughters in debt for life, is recognized by the Sunhet villagers (as well as many reform groups) as an evil which should be changed — although the one family which attempted to do so met with so much opposition that they had to go back to the traditional customs. However, the total cost is not borne by the father alone. In addition to the *tamol* through which all the relations and residents contribute set amounts, one third to a half of the cost is contributed by the bride or groom's *mama*. Specifically, the *mama* tends to pay for the personal articles such as clothes and ornaments which are given to the bride and groom by both *mamas*; whereas the fathers are responsible for the meals, arrangements, and dowry.

Primarily, but not exclusively, through the *mamas* a variety of articles purchased out of this total cost is given to the other side, forming an underlying exchange system, However, in a structural sense, this exchange is not merely economic but occurs whenever there is a"giver" and a "receiver" relation established. Thus, the bride herself becomes the most important "item" in the exchange system; and instances where "respect" is given and received may assume as integral a part in the system as economic items.

Utilizing this mode of analysis, it is possible to go through the marriage sequence of rituals isolating the transactions which occur. For heuristic purposes three kinds of transactions are distinguished: 1) purely economic ones accomplished without the *purohit*, 2) ritual transactions, usually with a *purohit*, and 3) the giving and receiving of "respect". In the following lists, BRIDE refers to the bride's family; and GROOM to the groom's family.

(1) ECONOMIC TRANSACTIONS

a) to BRIDE — gifts of clothes and jewelry
b) to GROOM — gifts of clothes
c) to GROOM — dowry. Although the dowry is the bride's possession it goes to the groom's house and in effect is a gift to the groom's family — even as the clothes, etc. given in (a) remain in the groom's house.

(2) RITUAL TRANSACTIONS

a) to GROOM — *savgan* (betrothal)' *tamol* (cloth and money)
b) to GROOM — *gei, puja* and *tamol* through bride's *purohit*
c) to GROOM — *milni* (meeting), *tamol*
d) to GROOM — *kanyadan*, gift of bride
e) to BRIDE — *guna, gunas* '(wheat balls) and money from in-laws

(3) RESPECT RELATION

a) to GROOM — up until the *bedi*, it is the bride's family which shows respect to the groom and his family through the *tamols*, in going farther for the *milni*, and in songs of respect during the meals.
b) to BRIDE — following the *bedi*, in the songs at meals, and at the Sirgundi, the groom and the *janet* are teased and treated with disrespect. The bride at her in-laws is also treated with respect.

Clearly, the exchanges are not balanced, and as the song stated, the, groom's family appears to "win". In condensed form it is seen that the economic gifts tend to cancel themselves out, and, if anything, are in the groom's favor. In the ritual transactions, the only gift to the bride occurs at the groom's house and can be seen as a gift of respect more than a gift which benefits the bride's family.

The imbalance present in this system was not present in the bride-price marriage which was historically replaced by the *kanyadan*. In the bride–price marriages the gift of the bride coincides with the reciprocal gift of the bride–price. In fact, according to information gathered for Pauri Teshil of Garhwal where Rajputs still practiced bride–price marriages, the marriage rituals are primarily composed of the ritualized giving of portions of the bride-price and *puja* to local gods, until the total amount is given, and the marriage is completed. In a situation of this kind where one "gift" given is equated with a "gift" received, each giver is also a receiver, and the relationship can be understood more clearly as "seller" and "purchaser". Between "sellers" and "purchasers" there are explicit attempts to equalize the exchange, and thus the bride-price (which is always substantial) compensates for, or "buys" the bride.

As was indicated previously, however, this atitude of "seller" and "purchaser" is abhorent to the sanskritic values among the Kangra Rajputs — a position further substantiated by the vehemence with which informants would deny any suggestion that the gifts given by one side should be equated with ones from the other side. But this same exaggerated response, like the song sung in Rampur, also suggests that the villagers are aware of how the transactions "add up", and place considerable importance on this. That is, there is the same necessity to equalize the exchange on an implicit or tacit basis.

Clearly, in lieu of a bride–price or any tangible compensations, there must be intangible ones if the same exchange structure is to be maintained. This intangible compensation is in the form of *pun* (merit) coming from the fact that the daughter is given in *dan*, as a religious gift. From this point of view, the ceremony can be seen as an attempt to make this *dan* as valuable as possible, so that the compensating *pun* received (which is in no way degrading like money) is the greatest possible. According to the *shastras*, *dans* should be given upwards to Brahmans, and the purer and more valuable the item is, the more merit is received from giving it.

According to the former criteria, it is noteworthy that Rajput hypergamy allows for the bride to be given upwards from a lower subcaste to a higher one. It may be argued that *kanya dan* is prevelant all over India whereas hypergamy is not, but I suspect that, as in the nearby Punjab, a kind of hypergamous hierarchy is created between villages when it does not exist on the caste level. This situation in which the receiver is of a higher ritual status than the giver not only allows the bride's father to give the bride as *dan*, but helps to explain why the groom and his party are treated with respect up to the time of the bedi. However, following the *bedi*, although the groom has "won" on the profane level, the bride's family has gained a temporary ascendency on the religious level through the extreme virtue of their *dan*, and are now able to treat the groom and his party with a superior disrespect.

This extreme value of the *dan* has been insured by promoting both the bride and groom to highly pure ritual status through the *samut* baths, *sand pujas*, etc. Thus, not only is the bride a gift of extreme purity (a virgin who has been purified) but the groom is identified with Vishnu, such that the recipient is now of far more ritual purity than even a Brahman. A *dan* of such a value to such a "person" produces an immense amount of *pun* (merit) which the "giver" receives in an implicit balancing of the exchanges. As the song states,

> Other dans are held frequently —
> Daughter's dan is held today;
> The dan of elephants and horses are held frequently —
> Daughter's dan is held only today;
> Ganga Ashnan (bathing in the Ganges) is done frequently —
> Daughter's dan is held only today.

Thus it appears that as in the bride–price the balance is maintained, and that the *lagan-bedi* and other rituals which are undergone can be seen as a structural substitute for the bride-price money.

RITE OF PASSAGE

As has been noted repeatedly through the discussion of the rituals of marriage, each rite serves a purpose within the total scheme of the ritual transition from unmarried to married. On an abstract level, this sequencial transition fits the basic pattern identified by van Gennepp for rites of transition. But it does so utilizing the religious language, the symbolic structures, of its own particular culture. The problem of life-cycle transitions is in some sense universal, but the particular kind of transition required in Indian Hinduism in its Kangra form, is unique. It would be a mistake to reduce the meaning of the Kangra marriage rituals to a more "universal pattern", in as much as the problems which are being expressed and solved in these rituals are intelligible only within the Hindu religious system — that is, are using its particular symbols. This is not to deny possible "universal" meanings, but to suggest that even that kind of meaning must be found through understanding the ritual in its own terms.

On the simplest level, the problem dealt with by the rite of transition is changing an an unmarried boy or girl into a married householder. In van Gennepp's terms, this is accomplished by separating him (or her) from his previous social and ritual position, effecting the transition, and then reincorporating him back into society in his new social-ritual position. As has been shown with each ritual, this cycle is effected through rituals which first remove him from his previous state to a ritually pure one (where he is even identified with Vishnu) and then rituals which separate him from his kin and caste relationships. In his ritually pure state in which neither the bride nor the groom nor can be thought of as persons, much less the persons they used to be, they are joined together around the fire, and reincorporated into their new positions in society by gradually removing the purity (or gradually polluting) and going through various rituals which place them in their new kinship statuses. Inasmuch as this is a cyclical or "hemispherical" movement, there are various "inner cycles" which show that, to some degree, "separation" and "reincorporation" are parallel but opposite movements. Thus, the groom bathes before going away, and after coming back; *kanganas* are tied on during "separation" and taken off during "reincorporation"; and *havans* are lit before, during, and after the *bedi.*

In addition to the central rites of transition which establish the bride and groom in their new roles and "states", are the peripheral individual and group rites of passage in which every member of the bride and groom's party participates. Thus a ritual which serves to separate the groom from his mother or other kin, also serves to separate them from him; and correspondingly, rituals which serve to accept the new house-holders into their new positions establish new relationships between kinsmen and the bride and groom. The *savgan,* the *milni,* the feasts, etc. then, are all rituals which establish new kinship and ritual relations between the people of the two villages. To a certain extent, it is even possible to discern transitional or "liminal" periods among these other people who are also undergoing minor rites of transition. For example, the *gidha* in which the groom's village women dance and sing all night while the men are away at the wedding, is certainly an event which occurs at no other time and indicates a degree of license not normally permitted. This is particularly true for the mother who is the central figure in the *gidha,* and it seems quite probable that at this point, after having given her breast to the groom from the last time, but not yet welcomed him back with the *arti*, she is considered to have a markedly changed relation to him.

In all of these rites of transition, the categories of sacred and profane time and space developed by Eliade in *The Sacred and the Profane* have a certain relevance. Clearly, a number of sacred places are established wherever the rituals are performed. For example, the *torna* or courtyard gate made of bamboo and mango leaves can be understood as demarcating the boundary of sacred space within which *bhuts* are not able to penetrate. However, sacredness is not only relative but different sorts of sacredness are brought into play, and whereas shoes may be worn in the courtyard at the grooms they may not be worn in the *Sand* room, or in the courtyard which contains the *bedi*. The *kasa* and *doli* can also be understood as portable sacred spaces which allow for the safe transport of the bride and groom when they are ritually so elevated — and simultaneously vulnerable (the groom always holds a handkerchief over his mouth when he is travelling with his *sehra* on to insure no *bhuts* enter or that he is defiled). The *bedi* , surrounded by the four bamboo poles representing the *Vedas* is clearly the most sacred place, and once it has been fully sanctified by the *purohit's puja*, it becomes the sacred place where the groom and bride are married.

The presence of two different time schemes, both sacred and profane, was also very clear. Before becoming aware of this explanation, I was always struck (and made uncomfortable by) the fact that when the groom was not undergoing a ritual or wearing the *sehra* he was not treated with any special deference, or at times was treated as though he was not even an important part of the marriage. That is, at the times in between rituals, he resassumed his status as a young son and was expected to wait on his elders the same way he had prior to the wedding. There is a clear dichotomy between ritual time (sacred time) and profane time, and it is evident that the continuity of ritual time is not disturbed by intervals of profane time (unless, of course, the groom were to become severely polluted). In a certain sense, as Eliade has suggested, this sacred time can be seen as paradigmatic time. The marriage can be understood in part as a re-enactment of the divine paradigm in Vishnu's wedding, where the groom himself is considered to be Vishnu, an idea reinforced by the explanation for the birds on the *bedi* — that they were present at Vishnu's wedding. Thus, inasmuch as these sacred times are seen as a re-enactment of events which occurred during a divine time, this can be understood as reversible.

STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

Throughout the preceeding descriptions and discussions of the *samskara* rituals I have had occasion to allude to several areas of underlying conflict or problems which may be understood through their oppositional relationship to each other. That is, the symbolic content of the rituals has been seen at times to take the form of oppositions clustered around separate and opposite poles. For example, the oppositions between father/maternal uncle; agnates/affines; sadhu/ghristi; purity/pollution; fasting/eating; giver/receiver; fire/water; male/famale; retention of semen/loss of semen; have been implicitly noted and partially developed without explicitly delineating the nature of the relations themselves, their relationship to each other, and their meaning in relation to the rituals.

As stated in the introduction, it is the contention of this study that it is precisely the kind of oppositions suggested above that form the structural basis of Kangra Hinduism. That is, that the life cycle rituals express and attempt to resolve certain contradictions and conflicts which are illuminated through structural analysis. However, in order to refine and complete our understanding of the terms, and thus the relations between them, it is necessary to examine the complete cycle of the *samskaras* as well as some of the local myths. Even then, the data is by no means complete, but the essentially repetitive nature of ritual and myth will allow a certain amount of confidence in the structures revealed. Thus further discussion of the structural aspects of the marriage ritual will be continued once the death ceremonies have been examined.

C. THE SAMSKARAS: DEATH

The normal form for death ceremonies as the last of the *samskaras* (*antyesti*) centers around the cremation of the deceased. In Sanskritic literature, this cremation has often been called *aurdhvadaihi ka kriya*, or, the ceremonies that release the soul from the body. From available evidence, it appears that the death ceremonies involving cremation have hardly changed over the last two millenia, and presently they are practiced in basically the same form throughout India (Basham: 1959, 176; Pandey: 1969). It appears anomolous, then, that children and saints are not cremated, but buried — a practice which was also recognized by the *shastras* and even discussed extensively by Manu.

That these two opposing forms of body disposal should exist within the same system suggests that children and saints are in some way defined in opposition to the bulk of the population. That this is in fact the case, I will attempt to demonstrate through the following discussion and analysis of the ceremonies of cremation and burial. An understanding of this opposition will in turn reveal aspects of the symbolic structure underlying the *samskaras* which will aid in understanding the *samskara* cycle as a whole.

Inasmuch as I attended only one each of the cremation ceremonies and burial ceremonies, I have occasionally departed from the previous style of presentation by referring to the single case witnessed. For purposees of this study, I have named the deceased in the cremation rites as Nathu Singh — who was a Rajput of a high sub-caste, and around eightly years old when he died. As many of the ritual items which are utilized in the death ceremonies are used repeatedly their symbolic meanings can best be found from their total context — and they are thus considered at the end of the initial discussion.

DEATH

When death is imminent, the person is moved to the ground and generally laid on a white cloth with *kusa* grass sprinkled on it — for under no circumstances is the person allowed to die on a bed. If possible, the person is laid so that his head faces the south, which is considered to be the direction of *Yama* the god of death. If the person is still conscious (as Nathu Singh was) he is made to perform the *Godan* ("cowgift") ceremony (S.=*viatarani*). For this ceremony, which is also performed at other times such as the *Godan* festival, money and water is put into the dying man's hands and a cow is brought into the room (an intrusion not otherwise allowed). The person then worships the head of the cow by circling the money around the cow in a clockwise fashion. Then the money is given to a small girl unrelated to the family, as such a girl is considered to represent the *devi*. Among the rich, this cow is also given to a Brahman, but informants state that this custom has been discontinued among the majority of the people. If the dying person is unconscions or already dead, he is "helped" to perform the ceremony anyway.

Pandey notes that in shastric sources, this cow "is supposed to be the conductor of the dead over the stream of the under-world". (Pandey: 1969, 246.). Initially, the cow was sacrificed in the cremation pyre with the deceased, but later prohibitions against cow-slaughter modified this practice so that the cow was either allowed to run loose or given to a Brahman — and recent Kangra practices appear to have modified this one step further. Pandey also records a brief *puja* to the household fire, for which I have no information for Sunhet.

At the moment of death, people are supposed to have the ability to see both worlds with an insight only attained by the most advanced saints. Villagers reported that Nathu Singh was just beginning to tell them what he saw when he faded off and died.

Just after death, a *diva* (clay lamp) is filled with *ghi* (clarified butter)and a wick which is long enough to last for ten days is lit in the corner of the room. It is considered very inauspicious for this *diva* to go out before the appropriate ritual. In addition, a *gara* (large clay vessel) is filled with water and set outside the threshold. In unusual circumstances, such as when a woman dies while away visiting her son, the *diva* flame is transferred to a lantern for the journey home in order that it will not go out.

Contrary to some other parts of North India, the body should be ceremated the same day, if possible. Since Nathu Singh died at nine in the evening, this was not possible; so it was the duty of the close male relatives to sit with the body all night while the women mourned in the next room. Soon after death, these women break the deceased's wife's bracelets, remove the red line in the part of her hair, and take out her nose ring. In addition, all the women loosen their hair and remove the shawl which at all other times covers their heads. All these actions signify that the wife is now a widow, and are completely opposite actions to those performed during the marriage in which she became a wife.

Preparations for cremation

In the morning after the death of Nathu Singh, Rajputs of the same hamlet went around cutting wood for the pyre, and making a bamboo bier from fresh bamboo. The women collected in the deceased's room and mourned with weeping and loud cries; while the men directly concerned had their whole heads (except the single *sikha* strand) shaved by the family barber. According to informants every agnatic relation who is younger than the deceased would shave their heads. As Nathu Singh was over 80 years old, this rule would have theoretically involved every one in the hamlet, whereas, in fact, only those of direct descent and the more conservative of the close relations were shaved. (One frightened sixteen-year old boy even fled the village to visit his relations under the mistaken impression he would have to shave his hair off just before returning to school.)

Other preparations involved the making of the five balls of *pind* out of wheat, barley, and water; and the mixing of the yellow flowers and the puffed rice that would be thrown on the body during the procession. These activities took place on the verandah of the deceased's house where the remainder of the men just sat talking and smoking. Periodically, a distinguished member of the hamlet rose and blew the conch shell in all directions — reportedly in order to inform people and scare off *bhuts*. A pot of coals from the hearth fire of the night before was kept burning with corn husks and cow dung. Aside from this one fire, no other fire is lit in the village, and a fast is maintained by everyone concerned until after the cremation.

Bathing the body

Wrapped in a blanket, the body is taken to a corner of the courtyard around which curtains are hung on rope beds, and is bathed by members of his own sex. He is then dressed in new clothes (if not available, clean clothes are sufficient), wrapped in a white *cadar* (light woolen blanket) which is tied in four places with red *dhora* (ritual red string), and taken back into his room where the women are mourning. A male relation then goes into the room and pours a small bowl of water with red pepper sprinkled on top over the body.

Next, the chief mourner who is the eldest living son or grandson (that is, the successor to the head of the family) dresses in a white *dhoti* without a shirt and with a piece of white cloth on his head which is not a turban. He goes into the deceased's room and offers the first *pind* (S.= *pinda*). The *pind* balls of rice are kept on a tray with a *lota* (brass vessel) in which is contained a small bundle of *drub* grass such as is used in other rituals. The procedure for offering *pind* is for the chief mourner to sprinkle water on one ball with the *drub* grass and then circle it once around the deceased's head in a clockwise direction. The *pind* ball is then put back on the tray, and to show that it has been offered, a hole is poked in the top with the thumb. Technically, an *Acariya Brahman* should be called to perform this ritual, but locally this has been discontinued for economic reasons — as villagers feel they are able to do it well enough themselves.

The funeral procession

After the bamboo bier has been tied together in the courtyard, it is first covered with a white cloth. On top of the cloth is sprinkled some barley grain and *kusa* grass. This is followed by spreading some pieces of cotton evenly over the bier, although informants stated that originally the entire bier used to be covered.

At this point the body is brought as far as the threshold, where the second *pind* is offered in the same manner as the first by the chief mourner. It is then taken to the bier where it is first tied on strongly with new rope, and then symbolically with red *dhora*. A red cotton cloth is laid over the body. The third *pind* is now offered to the head of the deceased.

After the third *pind* the women emerge from the house with intensified weeping, and start beating their breasts with both hands. With the widow leading, they start around the body in a counterclockwise direction, beating and wailing. When they reach his feet, each woman worships them with coconut, red *dhora*, money, and white cloth (*tamol*). Worship consists in touching the items to the deceased's feet, touching their own heads, and depositing the offerings on his feet. In Nathu Singh's funeral, his widow tucked five rupees under a piece of *dhora*. Finally, the *kofin*, a scarlet silk cloth is put over everything.

In this ritual, we once again note the converse of actions performed during the marriage. The *tamol* which marks changes in kinship status is offered to the deceased's feet along with coconuts which may perhaps be seen as the reverse of the *klira* coconuts given to the bride during the marriage, i.e. severance of kinship as opposed to its establishment. The counterclockwise circumambulation of the deceased is the opposite to the clockwise circumambulation which established the tie of marriage which has now been broken.

Following the women's *puja*, four close male relatives take the bier and carry it out of the courtyard a back way followed by other males. (If possible the bier should never be taken out an entrance as it is thought that death will visit the family again.) The women go as far as the boundary, bare-headed with their hair loosened, mourning and beating their breasts.

Halfway, the body is set on the ground, and the fourth *pind* is offered. Then, as the *drub* grass is thrown on the body, and the *lota* of water is taken by the chief mourner and circled clockwise around the body, pouring the water evently all around except the head, which receives the most. According to some informants, this ritual should be done at the beginning and end as well, although this contradicts the observed procedure and the information obtained on other areas. However, Pandey notes that special rites should be performed at three points during the procession which would indicate shastric sanction to these informant's point of view.

The body is then carried to the family (sub-caste) burning site on the river and set down close to the water with the head facing north and down stream. Villagers some distance from the river have established places on streams and dry river beds. Aside from cremation at Beneras or Hardwar on the Ganges (a possibility beyond the economic feasibility for Kangra villagers), the most sacred place for cremation is a temple village four miles up the Beas River, where, for a fee, the special Acariya Brahmans perform the ceremonies. However, most people continue to use their family site.

Cremation

It is the responsibility (*hukh*) of everyone in the funeral party to bring one piece of wood, although for the benefit of some, there is often a pile provided close to the site. This wood is thrown in one place, where the pyre is made about a foot from the river— its foundation being a round flat stone. The body is taken off the bier and laid in the middle of the pyre. Then the fifth and last *pind* is offered to the deceased, after which the chief mourner throws each of the *pind* individually into the river. Wood is piled on the body and various more inflammable materials are stuffed in the sides and on top. (Wood that is brought by mourners arriving late is first dipped into the river before being thrown on the pyre.)

A boy from the family brings the clay pot with the coals which was in the courtyard, and breaks it at the base of the pyre under the body's head. Then the chief mourner followed by the close members of the *bradri* (relatives and community) makes a torch from the burning portion and circumambulates the pyre clockwide, lighting it all the way around. This serves as the consecration of the pyre, and the area near the pyre becomes sacred space, i.e. people take off their shoes to approach, and some feces lying nearby were covered up by sand. Pandey states that at this point in the shastric ceremony, the chief mourner should chant the following *mantra* :

> O Agni, consume not this body to cinders; nor give it pain, nor scatter about its skin or limbs ! O Jatavedas, when the body is fairly burnt, convey the spirit to its ancestors. (Pandey: 1869, 254)

In Sunhet while the pyre is burning most people sit around and smoke while others are occupied cutting the bier and other wood into small pieces. Two to three of these pieces are then distributed to everyone, with one piece necessarily being a splinter from the bamboo bier.

When the fire is burning fairly well, the chief mourner and others sit opposite the head to observe when the skull cracks open. When the skull is declared to have broken (it is difficult to determine), a long piece of sharpened bamboo from the bier is used to break it open completely by the chief mourner, where upon the bamboo is thrown on the pyre. (At Nathu Singh's funeral there was some confusion at this point, and the stick was first thrown into the river until the headman pointed out the mistake and it was hastily retrieved.) At this moment, the conch shell is again blown.

Then the chief mourner, followed by the rest of the funeral party, washes his small sticks in the river, worships the foot of the pyre, and throws the sticks into the flames. In the case I witnessed, ritual procedure was lax at this point — some people threw the sticks onto the head of the pyre and failed to perform the worship (which consisted of joining the palms together and touching them to the forehead).

Traditionally, I was told that everyone used to take a bath as the final cremation ritual. Supporting this view, Pandey states that in addition to a bath,

> the mourners turn their faces toward the south, plunge under the water and calling upon the dead person by name offer a handful of water to him. (Pandey: 1969, 255)

Now-a-days, as at Nathu Singh's cremation, only the chief mourner, a few close relatives, and some children interested in swimming actually take baths; others symbolically wash their hands and faces only (although their knowledge of what "used to be done" is indicative of what they felt "should be done").

All but a few (an odd number: 1, 3, or 5) mourners now leave and return for their first meal since the death. The men that remain at the pyre make sure all the bones and flesh are burnt, except for some knuckles from the toes and fingers along with some ashes which are preserved. After burning, the site of the pyre is completely cleaned with river water until there is not a trace of body or pyre left. The knuckles and ashes are taken back to the house either in the red *kofin* cloth, or in a pot. These are then buried in the courtyard until the time when they can be taken to Hardwar on the Ganges by a member of the family. (Except for the poorest of families, this procedure is always followed, and for the high castes, there are special priests (Pandas) in Hardwar who keep each family's records for a considerable fee.)

Mourning period

For ten days following the death the chief mourner offers *pind* every day. In some cases, it is offered first to the diva (lamp) and then to the river (or water source); whereas in others it is offered directly to the latter. Also, depending on local variations in customs, water is either dripped slowly into the *gara* outside the door, or is allowed to drip slowly out of a hole in the bottom of the *gara* which is filled with *kusa* grass.

During this period no one is supposed to change his clothes or shave his beard, although some of the more distantly related younger generation do not adhere to this rule. For sixteen days everyone must eat simply, and abstain from meat. This is particularly true for the chief mourner and the direct descendants of the deceased who must also abstain from strong food, such as onions and garlic, sleeping on a bed, or sexual relations. Also, they may eat only once a day. Women must, in addition, refrain from wearing ornaments or make-up.

During these ten days the chief mourner sits on a carpet placed on the verandah. Here, male members of the family and the community gather and express condolences and sympathy. Some families will also call in an *Achariya Brahman* who holds a *katah* (scriptural recitation) for the family in which he reads portions from the scriptures (usually the *Gur Shankar Puran*) and speaks of the various heavens, and the soul's journey.

Kapre (*"Clothes"*)

On the tenth day, the *diva* flame is removed from its place in the corner and wheat flour is shaken out onto the spot where the *diva* was kept, and covered with a cloth. Then the *diva* and the *gara* are taken out about a half mile from the village with the *diva* still burning. Here, the *diva* is extinguished and the *gara* broken on the ground. On the return, or perhaps before, the cloth is taken off the flour, and the family observes the flour to see what kind of footprints or imprint is there — as this indicates the next reincarnation the deceased will take. *Pind* is discontinued after this day.

Also on the tenth day, all the *bradri* (affinal and agnatal relations to the deceased) collect to wash their clothes and bathe, including both the women and men. (This is the only occasion I know of when men wash their own clothes.) The men have their beards shaved, the women are now free to resume wearing ornaments. In the shastras this rite is called *santikarma* "pacifying rite", and recommends the pairing of the nails as well.

Karam or Kriya ("ceremony" or "rite")

On the thirteenth day, the *karam* or *kriya* ceremony is held. For this, the *Achariya* or *Charj* Brahman is called. For the ceremony, a four sided enclosure similar to the *bedi* is made of bamboo, banana leaves, mango leaves, etc. Beneath this, the Charj performs a *puja* utilizing the usual *havan* diagram and *puja*, i.e. the same as was used for the *Sand* marriage ceremony in which the various constellations and gods are invoked. Then, as a form of *dan* the chief mourner who is the instrument for the *puja* gives the *Charj* Brahman a bed, comforters, mattress, pots and pans, and clothes which all originally belonged to the deceased. (It may be recalled that the *Charj* Brahman's lower ritual status in relation to the *kul purohit* is due to the fact that he is willing to accept these gifts of the deceased.)

Sola ("sixteen")

As the name indicates, the *sola* occurs on the sixteenth day. On this day all the *bradri* assemble and a big feast containing onions, garlic, and possibly meat, is prepared by the *kuram*

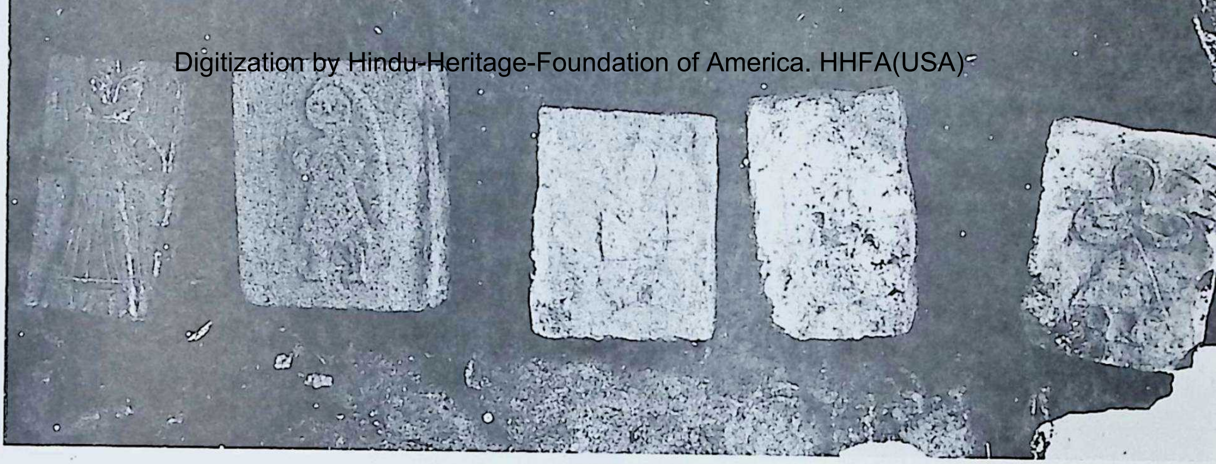


Plate 22 (above). Sati figures.

Plate 23. Family images to Baba Deot Sidh (Baba Balak Nath) in Sunhet.

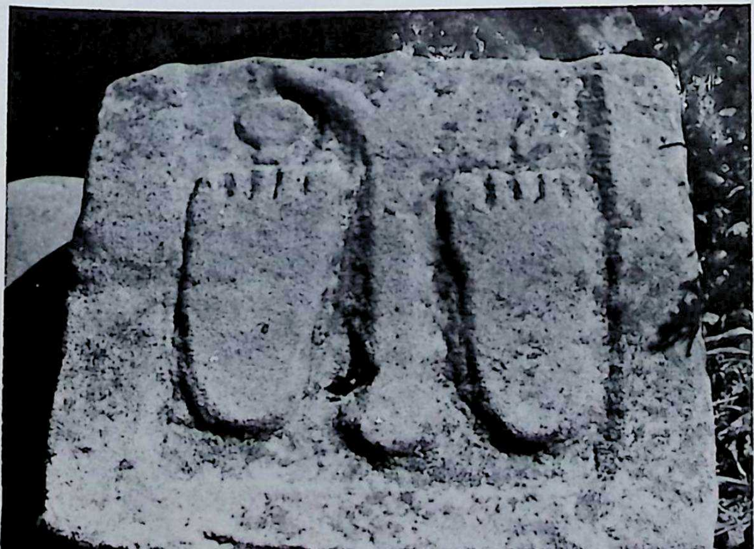


Plate 24. The footprints of Baba Deot Sidh with snake heads arising from the toes and a trident between his feet.

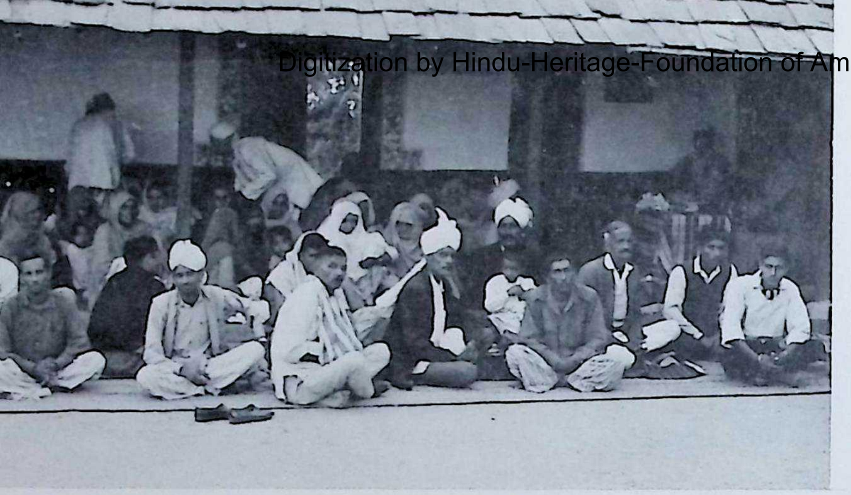


Plate 25. A Satsangh meeting of the Radha Soami sect.

Plate 26. Low caste girls who are members of the Radha Soami sorting grain.

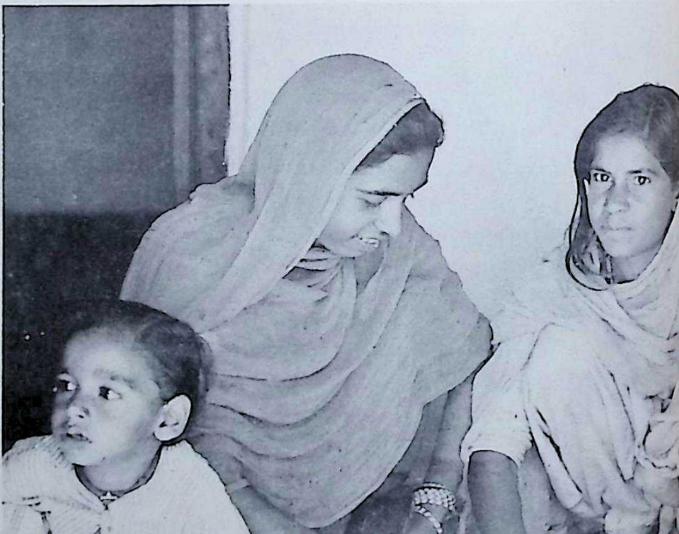


Plate 27. The author presents tamol to a groom in Sunhet.

(the affines, esp. the widow's family). When the meal is ready, the chief mourner bathes and a turban is wrapped on his head by his *mama* (maternal uncle). The chief mourner is then fed first by the *mami* (maternal uncle's wife) or the female head of the *kuram*. Following this all of the *bradri* are fed, and the period of mourning is officially over.

Commemorations

After one month, *mas* or *mask* ("month") is held. For this commemoration, the *Charj* Brahman is called and *pind* composed of the current crop is offered to the deceased through the *Charj* by means of the same prodcedure used previously. The Brahman is then fed.

Every year, the *sraddh* ceremony is performed in honor of the deceased. This ceremony is usually performed every year until the death of all the deceased's sons, at which point it is usually discontinued unless the man was especially great and well-remembered. The ceremonial activities on each *sraddh* are a combination of those which occur on the *sola* and the *mask*. That is, the special feast of rice, *dal* curds, etc. is prepared but not eaten until the *sraddh* (*pind*) has been offered. In the *sraddh*, the chief mourner sits with the *Charj* while the latter reads the *mantars*, and then *pind* made from rice and *ghi* is given to the Brahman by the chief mourner. Then, after *Surya* (the Sun) has been called on to witness that it has been given, the meal is eaten. Occasionally, among the wealthy, a cow is also given to the *Charj*.

The *covark* ("four years") is the most important of the *sraddhs* held after four years. In this ceremony the whole of the *karam* ritual is repeated with the important difference that the regular family priest (*kul purohit*) presides, and consequently the bed, clothes, etc. which are given are all new.

THE SOUL'S JOURNEY

The death *samskara* is in large part concerned with the deceased's soul, and its safe and correct transition. Inasmuch as this soul is not present as a tangible visible figure such as the protagonists of the other *samskaras* are, the symbols and ritual items have to deal with the unseen. Thus the death ceremonies more than the others illuminate the relationship betwen this world and the other world through the deceased's transition into that other world.

Villager's notions as to where the soul goes before it reaches heaven (*svarg*; S.=*svarga*) and from there to rebirth are vague and contradictory. However, the ritual symbolism reveals the whereabouts of the soul for at least the first ten days.

The first five balls of *pind* are offered specifically to the deceased's head. Informants give the meaning of *pind* as being food for the soul on its long journey, much as the cow and money are to provide transportation across the river. After being offered to the deceased, they are thrown into the sacred river, suggesting that the river goddess functions as a mediator. When the skull cracks, it is broken open with the bamboo stake. The explanation for this act is that it "enables the soul to get out." Pandey states that this practicc is based on the belief that the soul "escapes through the *Brahmarandhra* or hole on top of the head." (Pandey: 1969, 272). It is clear, therefore, that up to this point the soul (H.–*jan*; U.–*ruhhi*; S.–*atma*) has still been in the head of the deceased (where the *pind* were offered); and that one purpose of the cremation is to release it from the body.

Subsequently, *pind* is offered either at the *diva* (lamp) or directly to the river — and in either case it is eventually thrown into the river. The *diva* lamp and the *gara* of water remain at the house for ten days until they are taken out from the village where the light is extinguished and the *gara* broken. Among some families the *gara* is not set in the courtyard until after the cremation, when water from the river is brought back. In any case the dropping of water into it or the arranging for the water to drip out slowly is not done until after the body has been burned. From the above, it seems apparent that the soul returns to the house where it is represented by the flame and given water to drink in the *gara*, as well as the *pind* food to eat. At the end of ten days, the soul is gently "moved" out of the house and away from the places of habitation, and the ritual items which were its "seat" are destroyed. It is set loose, and subsequent *pinds* (at the mask and *sraddhs*) are no longer given to the river, but to a Brahman — apparently a more "indirect" mediator. From this point on the soul's journey is more obscure: "It somehow makes its way to heaven if it doesn't become a ghost."

It would seem contradictory that the *diva* represents the soul when confronted with the fact that in Indian symbolism, as well as Western, death is represented by the extinguishing of the flame. For example, in Indian movies the going out of the bedside lamp is an often used symbol of death; and the word *nirvana* literally means "*extinguishing*". However, these usages strengthen the identification of the soul's life with the flame of the *diva* rather than dissociating the two. Thus the lighting of the *diva* represents the return of the spirit of the deceased during his transitional journey to heaven; and the second extinguishing of the flame represents his second and final departure from the house. According to this scheme, then, the soul's failure to depart the second time (i.e. its becoming a *bhut*) would indicate as suggested earlier that *bhuts* are souls whose rites of passage have somehow been arrested witnin the transitional or liminal state — an indication that will be developed later.

The hill people towards the south-east in Garhwal do not light a lamp continuously for the mourning period after cremation. Yet, through a symbol substitution the same basic format of the soul's journey is to be found. In Garhwal, the chief mourner picks up a stone at the cremation site and carries it home. It is called a *lingra* , and is a symbol of Siva (Siva's most common symbol is the *lingam*, the stone phallus). Of it, Berreman writes,

> It represents the fact that the deceased is now one with Siva, though the average villager thinks of it primarily as representing the deceased. (Berreman: 1963, 406)

The *lingra* is kept for thirteen days outside the house in a brass tumbler, and each morning milk is poured over it in *puja*. On the thirteenth day the Brahman, the chief mourner, and the unmarried girls of the family take the stone outside the village and place it in the traditional place— from where it is supposed to eventually fly to Badrinath (one of the sacred sources of the Ganges). Thus, though a different (and more fertile) symbol is used in Garhwal, we find the same basic ways of dealing with and understanding the deceased's journey immediately after death.

THE ROLE OF THE MALEVOLENT SUPERNATURAL

The increased vulnerability to *bhuts* which appears to be a characteristic of all transitional periods is particularly acute following death. For not only is the deceased in a state of relative pollution, but his body which is the normal mode of access by *bhuts* is completely defenseless. This, plus the ever-present danger that the deceased himself will remain a ghost, helps to explain why a number of precautions against *bhuts* are in evidence in the death ceremonies.

The removal of the dying man from his bed (in which there is air underneath him) to the ground would seem to be primarily a precautionary action. When invoked in a religious setting, the earth is understood as Prithvi, the goddess who contains a sacred power which is of some value in repelling *bhuts*. Furthermore, a bed of *kusa* grass has been placed on the ground where the person is to be lain. *Kusa* grass was said by informants to have the power of frightening ghosts, and several of the older men stated explicitly that this was its purpose in the rituals. This meaning for the *kusa* grass is consistent with its position in Sanskrit literature. For example, it is sometimes mentioned as "*pavitrarthe ime kusah*", "the *kusa* is for the purpose of purifying (or making sacred)"

According to the above interpretation, it would be expected that danger from *bhuts* is increased during the funeral procession when the deceased is again separated from the earth. This is evidently the case. In addition to *kusa* grass, barley and cotton are spread over the white cloth on the freshly made bamboo bier. Without distinguishing between these different items, informants stated that they were put there "so that *bhut-pret* do not fasten on." Certainly other situations such as the bedi, pujas, etc. can be recalled where these items were used in circumstances of relative sacredness, as defining the boundaries of a sacred space. Bamboo is also used in the *karam* ceremony on the thirteenth day in a similar fashion by defining the boundaries of the sacred fire. The use of the red *dhoris* which is a frequently used ritual item along side the regular rope to tie the body to the bier further emphasizes the dual "practical" and "religious" purposes of these items in purifying the deceassed and protecting from evil spirits. The red *kofin* cloth made from pire silk may be included in this same category, while also suggesting that this cloth is given for the deceased to wear on his journey to heaven — for all types of wanderers from mendicants to beggars wear a cloth which is also called *kofin*. (The word *kofin* appesrs to derive from the sanskrit *kaphin*, "one who has an excess of the humor phlegm"—the connection is not entirely clear but could be meaningful.)

In order to remove all bodily traces or impurities through which a *bhut* might be able to endanger the deceased's soul, special care is taken to remove all bones, ashes, and wood which remain from the cremation pyre and immerse them in the river. Although the fact that in some areas where poorer families are not able to afford wood for cremation the whole body is thrown in the water suggests that this also is a part of the purification rite for the deceased. In any case, the two notions are not mutually exclusive. For the same reasons as stated above, care is taken that the ashes which are kept for transport to Hardwar are buried in the ground, or in some parts of Northern India, placed in the nitch of the *kul devta*.

At this point the deceased himself is referred to as a spirit "*pret*" — but not necessarily a permanent malevolent one "*bhut*". It appears from the use of *kusa* grass in the bottom of the *gara* from which the soul drinks that the spirit of the deceased has attributes of purity which distinguish him from *bhuts* and allow him to drink from the *gara* while repelling all *bhuts* through the *kusa* grass. This protection of the deceased's drinking water appears to be the last ritual action devoted to protecting the deceased from evil powers.

RITE OF PASSAGE

As a rite of passage, the "steps" of separation/transition/incorporation are clearly found in the death rituals. The purpose of these "steps" is to accomplish the transition to the world of the *pitar* "the sainted dead" in heaven. As such, the transition rituals must separate the soul from the dead body and attempt to insure a safe journey to the *pret* until he becomes a *pitar* (ancestor). However, the *pitar* are pure while a man in his normal state is *relatively* impure— and death is an added pollution. Thus the problem is to transform a relatively impure being into a pure being. If this transition cannot be completely accomplished, then the deceased becomes a *bhut*, a malevolent spirit.

Hindu thought and practice has always located pollution as primarily a characteristic of the physical body (*sarir*) which requires continual cleansings through its constant pollution from bodily emissions, associations, etc. In contrast, the soul (*atma*) is understood as being essentially pure, and although the inexorable workings of *karma* place upon it debts and credits of good and bad (including pure and impure) deeds, it is ultimately one with the *paramatma*, "the Great Soul". This dichotomy of body and soul, furthers elucidates the logic of the death ceremonies. For not only must the soul be separated from the body so that it may journey to the land of the *pitars;* it must be separated from the body's impurity. However, there is a further complication here in that as long as the body is impure, the separation results in an impure soul — a *bhut*. Thus the body must be itself purified, and purified permanently such that there is no recurring pollution which might then attach itself to the spirit of the dead.

Thus, although death is inherently polluting, there are various rituals to purify the body prior to cremation by bathing it, clothing it in pure clean white clothes, and protecting it with ritual items to insure it is not polluted by a *bhut*. Similarly, the chief mourner (and his relatives who have all been made impure in relation to other people and their normal status) bathes and dons a *dhoti* which is the purest form of apparral to become *relatively* pure in relation to the other mourners. It is only through this relative purity that he is able to help the deceased make the transition into purity. The now obsolete usage of a *Charj* Brahman was exactly the same — for although a *Charj* is impure in relation to other Brahmans through his contact with death, he is relatively pure in relation to the mourners through his caste status.

The cremation fire is the ultimate purifier. Not only does it purity the body through burning, but it is the agency through which the soul is separated from the head by breaking open the skull. It marks the final separation of the deceased from his previous situation, as as well as the transition into a *pret*, a transitional state which lasts for at least another thirteen days. This dual purpose helps to explain the sanskritic invokation recorded by Pandey, where Agni is entreated not to give the deceased pain. For while the fire is necessary to purity the body and separate the soul, it appears that there is some danger that it may harm the soul if it burns too hot. This notion which finds support in several *Parvati* myths, may aid in understanding the necessary (opposite) presence of water, and the water offered to the deceased by the mourners — that is, in order to offset the heat of the fire.

The *karam* ceremony on the thirteenth day, three days after the soul has been expelled from the house may be understood as the incorporation ceremony. Whereas my own investigations merely elicited the explanation that the *karam* is intended to call upon the gods for the sake of the deceased (in part, to show how he is honored at home), Pandey records shastric sources which clearly indicate this rite's purpose:

> On the dates prescribed for Sapindikarana the Sodasa Sraddhas are performed in the beginning. Then four pots are filled with sesame seeds, perfumes and water. Three of them are offered to the Pittaras and one to the Preta. The contents of the Preta–pot are (then) poured into the Pitarpot. (Pandey: 1969, 267)

By identifying three of the pots with the *pitar* (S.=*pitr*) and the fourth with the *pret* (S.=*preta*), and mixing them, the soul of the deceased is clearly incorporated into the world of the *pitar*.

As in the marriage ceremonies, some of the ritual actions which can be understood as rites of transitions, concern the social and kin relationships which must be broken between the deceased and the living. These center primarily on the widow and the chief mourner, not only because they are the two people whose social and ritual status is most changed by the death, but also because they represent the female and male relatives in their person.

For a Rajput woman who may not remarry, the death of her husband is indicative, in a significant sense, of her own ritual death, for she derives her social and religious status primarily from her husband. This is consistent with the local ideal which is expressed as: "A wife should think of her husband as her god". The logical extension of this notion is *sati* — the widow's self-immolation on her husband's pyre; but this has been discontinued for some time, and only ramains as an ideal in the form of *sati* goddesses. And, in fact, widows who remain as the head of the family and are left land and money, are able to maintain much of their status and position— though as widows, not as wives.

As has been noted, the rituals which provide the transition from wifehood to widowhood are the same but opposite from ones which established wifehood. Thus, the nose-ring, the ornaments, and the red line in the hair-part are removed. As there is no leverite in Kangra as in other parts of North India where the widow is given as wife to the deceased's younger brother, widowhood signifies the end of intercourse and fertility for the widow, as is suggested by the removal of the red part-line and the nose ring. The final rite of separation is the counter-clockwise circumambulation of the body and the worship of the feet with the *tamol* and the coconut. As women are supposed to worship the feet of their husbands, this act recalls the marriage ritual in which the mother gives her breast for the last time to the groom.

For the widow the accent is heavily on separation from her previous status for her status-to-be as a widow is mostly non-existent. However, following the *sola* there is some sort of incorporation in which she can at least comb her hair, cook, do *pujas*, etc.

For the *bradri* as a whole, the period of mourning lasts for sixteen days and culminates in the communal feast of the *sola* ceremony. This sixteen-day mourning period appears to be distinct from the ten-day pollution period which is completed with the washing of clothes and bathing. This distinction suggests a certain separation between the concepts of pollution and mourning, but this not completely clear. Theoretically, this pollution extends to kinsmen removed by seven degrees; that is, all descendents from a man seven generations before the deceased— and the length of pollution varies inversely with the degree. My information on this is incomplete, but I only discovered a distinction between those directly descendent from the deceased both patrilineally and matrilineally; and those indirectly related. The former are under strict rules of pollution for the ten days, while the latter may attend marriages, etc., if necessary, after three days.

During the period of mourning, the *bradri* shave their heads and let their beards grow—which is exactly opposite to the situation which prevails normally, although older Rajputs used to grow beards. In addition, until after the cremation, no fire is lit and no food is eaten, and until the *sola* there is a various food restrictions which keep the diet sparse (suggesting a fast) and pure. It is significant here that informants placed the emphasis on the lack of fire until after the cremation. From the time of death until cremation, the only fire that is maintained is the one from the deceased's hearth, which in turn becomes the cremation fire. For the moment, it may be noted that through this restriction, fire's (Agni's) dual function of cooking and religious rituals has been limited to the single ritual function. Not only does this increase the value and respect for Agni in this function but it ceases Agni's function as the perpetuator of life through cooking food in the face of death. Additionally, one also wonders if there might not be an idea of the possible premature and incomplete "cremation" of the deceased if there was another fire burning.

The *bradri* (male) participate in the deceased's transition by each putting a piece of wood on the pyre in a form of sacrifice. (As wood is scarce, this is also a cooperative economic act.) The specific rite of separation of the *bradri* from the deceased occurs when each person throws the purified (dipped in the river) small sticks on the south end of the pyre in the form of *puja*. This rite is in one sense equivalent to the one performed by the widow and the other women. Its meaning is further clarified by comparison with the similar ritual in the Punjab. Of this ritual as it was performed at the turn of the century, Rose writes:

> In this (the straw breaking ceremony) the *acharaj* (same as the Kangra *Charj*) recites aloud a *mantra* ending in the familiar words *yatra ae tatra gachhate* 'whence he came, thither he goes'. At the end of this *mantra* everyone takes a straw breaks it in two and throws it backwards over his head. (Rose: 846)

The small twigs almost certainly symbolize the same meaning as the broken straw; that is, the newly broken connection between the deceased and the *bradri*. As in the widow's *puja*, the circumambulation is backwards and the twigs are thrown on the feet, rather than the head. In the Punjab this same inauspiciousness, or opposite aspect of the ritual is indicated by throwing the straws backwards over the head.

Whereas the women have powerful sanctioned modes of expressing their emotional loss in mourning (weeping and beating their breasts); the men are expected to remain relatively stoic. Their only cathartic means of expression occur during the days which follow the cremation when they gather on the rug on the verandah of the deceased's house and express condolences to the chief mourner.

Significantly in light of the previous *samskaras*, the sole ritual which marks the end of the mourning and incorporates the chief mourner into his new role as head of the household and that particular patrilineage, is performed by the *kuram*, the maternal side. As in the *prasahi* ritual which established the groom in his patrilineage, it is the *mama* who re-establishes the male

lineage in the house of the deceased by tying the chief mourner's turban. Furthermore, it is the affinal females who prepare and serve the "first" food to the chief mourner and his family, thereby giving the patrilineage continuing life. For the moment, we may note that this is consistent with Turner's conclusion that it is the "structurally inferior", the "submerged side of kinship" that is "morally and ritually superior" and contains the greater "sacred power".
(Turner: 1969, 118 & 125).

BURIAL — DEATH OF A STILL-BORN CHILD

As is customary in Kangra, the daughter of the headman had returned home for the birth of her first child. When labor set in, it was extremely painful, and the local *Vaid* practitioner was called in twice to administer herbs and give injections to facilitate delivery. But the baby, a boy, was born dead.

The reactions of the villagers were surprisingly slight. Whenever the news was told to somebody new, they would say "*Bagwan di marzi*" ("It is God's will"), and rejoice that the mother was all right. Friends did not give condolences, but rather kept repeating how fortunate it was that the mother survived — often using the analogy of a potter whose pot breaks, but who lives to make new ones.

For the burial, the child was tied up in a pure white cloth, around which were tied two red *dhoras*. Since the head of the mother's natal family was away, his brother (the child's maternal great-uncle) presided over the ceremonies. The child was carried by another person out to a sort of burial ground on unused land about a hundred yards from the hamlet. There, a hole was dug, primarily by the mother's uncle, rocks collected, and thorn branches cut. Only a few of the men from the village were present.

When everything was ready, the child was put in, making sure that the head faced north (the person almost put it in backwards until he was corrected by everyone present). Then the mother's uncle threw on at least two handfuls of dirt. When he was finished everyone present followed his example. This was called "giving dirt to the child" ((*bacce yo matthi sitan*). The only words accompanying this action was the remark that it must have been part of the child's destiny that I should have come all the way from America to give him some dirt.

After the handful of dirt, a layer of thorn and a little straw was put in the half-filled grave. This was followed by filling the grave with the rest of the dirt. Then on top of the grave more thorns were laid so that the whole area was covered. (Someone asked if the heavier thorns should be put on too, and the reply was, "Yes, they will also scare it.") Large rocks were then piled on top of the thorns to hold them in place, after which everyone left.

Except for the mother who was in child-birth pollution, there was no pollution attached to the death, as the naming ceremony has not taken place, and the mother's sister did not need to postpone her *troza* (last ritual journey to her husband's house). However, there was a three day mourning period which was marked by abstinence from rich foods and celebrations.

As suggested by the remark quoted above, most of these actions and items significance lies in their ability to keep the child from leaving his grave and becoming a *batal*, a child *bhut*. The only ritual action whose significance does not appear to be precautionary is the giving dirt to the child" — an act of respect which also serves as a rite of separation of the kinship ties which had, at the most, existed only potentially.

The criteria for determining whether a child is to be buried or cremated are vague and contradictory. Some informants stated that the decision to bury a child is decided by individual parents if the child dies between the ages of five and seven. Other state that the decision is based upon whether the child's baby teeth have started to fall out, and his adult ones come in. Rose likewise is unable to determine any consistent criteria;

> As a general rule children are buried and not burnt, if they die before attaining a certain age, which is very variously stated as being 6 months or a year in Gujranwala; 2½ years or even 8 years in Hissar; before the first tonsure at 22 months in Kangra; 2 years generally in Sialkot, etc. (Rose: 863)

Pandey also cites various different opinions by classical writers, ranging from under the age of two or prior to the first teeth all the way to the *upanayana* ceremony.

This variability is indicative of the unclear transition into society and may be considered analogously to the Christian debate over the time of the soul's entrance into the body or embryo. As we have seen, complete entrance into society (in a ritual sense) does not occur until the first *samskara* is entered in the *janeo* ceremony. However, for Rajputs this is not until the time of marriage, and is clearly very late. Another logical point is at the *mundan*, the first tonsure, and Rose, in fact, cities this as the criterion for Kangra. However, there is no consistency regarding this point, and the many references to teeth show that it is an arbitrary judgement of the extent of the child's entrance into society as an individual social and ritual unit.

The important point is that whenever the cutoff point may be, children are buried because they are social and ritual non-entities; they have not completed the transition into human society. A principle characteristic of this state is the kind of neutralness in relation to purity and pollution. Thus, although the child is born in relative impurity, his nakedness and innocence is relative purity. This is an imprecise definition but then the criteria for determining burial are imprecise, and it may be suspected that the vagueness which surrounds the child's entry into the world of purity and pollution is directly related to the vagueness which is in evidence in the burial decision.

The child's pre-societal and pre-ritual status, thus, would seem to explain why he is not cremated. If there is no impurity to be removed, of what value is the burning ? Furthermore, and more significantly, if the child's individual soul (*jiv-atma*) has not yet been "individuated", that is, is not existent with individual status, then how can it be separated to allow for its journey to heaven ? The child who is buried has not yet completed his transition into society (has not completed his birth), thus it is not possible to take him through another transition. Rather, it appears that the transition that he was making into the world is reversed, and the burial is an attempt to take the child backwards to his pre-birth source — indicating that the grave may in fact be understood as a symbolic womb. But in that the death has occurred during incomplete transition or "suspension bettween worlds" the same structural position is achieved as found among those who become *bhuts*, thus the danger of the child also becoming a *bhut* is also great as the many precautions taken indicate.

In the burial of saints, exactly the same structural relation to society holds as in the burial of children, Thus, the saint is also outside of society both socially and ritually. He is casteless, famililess, and although in a state of basic purity, really exists outside the system of purity and pollution as it affects normal householders. However, this structurally identical relationship arises out of the opposite circumstances. Where the child has not completed his transition into society, the saint (used in a broad sense) has passed beyond society in the state of transition into the divine. His death or *samadhi* merely indicates the final transition out of his body and the union of his soul with the "Great Soul". In fact, it is precisely this ability on his part to unite his *atma* with the *paramatma* prior to death which both gives him his power (*siddha*) and enables him to escape the necessity of cremation. He requires no purification, no separation from his body, and thus, no cremation. Cremation is necessitated by "separateness", by a social and ritual "individuality"; whereas the relationship of the child and the saint to *Brahman*, the pervading Soul, is precisely one of non-separation, or non-individuality.

D. THE SAMSKARAS AS A WHOLE

The foregoing discussion of the *samskaras* has placed particular emphasis on the ritual process. Symbols and ritual actions have been analyzed primarily with the intent to reveal the transitions between life-stages, and the ways in which these transitions have been accomplished. From this point of view, the *samskaras* have been seen as a means of ushering the person through the cycle of *samskara*, from birth to death, or, more accurately, from pre-birth to after-death. That is, the *samskaras* have been seen as a means of bringing the person into this world (ritually, socially, economically, etc.) from the "other world", and then at the end of the cycle removing him from this world and returning him to the "other world".

However, throughout this analysis, a structural viewpoint has also been taken in order to reveal symbolic meanings. For, as stated in the introduction, the meaning of a symbol or ritual action is in part understood from the sum total of its uses at different times and in different rituals. Among these, certain symbolic actions have regularly appeared throughout the whole of the *samskaras*, and we are now in a position to verify and elaborate on the important actions.

For example, in the list of situations in which *tamol* (the ritual gift of cloth and money) is given, it is apparent that between the giver and the receiver there is always a changing (or changed social relationship.

Tamol (cloth and money, gift)

(1) birth: *mama* to child (a new relationship)
(2) *savgan*: (bride's father to groom)
(3) *parsahi*: relatives to groom (end of old relationship)
(4) *gei*: bride's family to groom through *purohit*
(5) *milni*: bride's family to groom's family
(6) *kanganas*: (new *dharm* brothers and *dharm* sisters)
(7) death: widow to deceased husband (end of relationship)

Clearly each of these acts also contains other meanings within their individual contexts, but they nevertheless find common meaning in the changing relationship.

In a similar fashion, bathing specified by the *samskara* rituals, appears to exhibit a consistent common meaning in the concept of purifying.

Baths

(1) birth: (removing pollution)
(2) *samuts:* (purifying groom)
(3) *prasahi:* (purifying groom for patrilineage and *sehra*)
(4) prior to *lagan* (before donning ritual *dhoti*)
(5) *suratra* (unclear)
(6) body bathed prior to cremation (purifying)

It seems that it does not matter whether the purification is from impure to normal, or normal to varying degrees of pure; rather, whenever the relationship after the bath to before the bath is one of greater purity to lesser purity, then the bath can be understood as the means of transforming the latter into the former.

However, attempting this same sort of analysis with the *havan*, the ritual fire of *Agni*, no single category of change emerges. The *havan* is always associated with some type of change because the *samskaras* themselves are concerned with changes (transitions), but in each case the terms of the change are different.

Havan (ritual fire)

(1) weaning: milk to/food
(2) *mundan* (tonsure): uncut hair/to cut hair
(3) *sand:* without ritual status/to ritual status
(4) *bedi;* unmarried to/married
(5) *gotar malana:* agnates *gotra* to/affines *gotra*
(6) cremation: with body/to without body; impurity/to purity

At this point, then, the only consistent feature of the *havan* is that it is a mediator between changes; but more importantly, a mediator between oppositions. For what the example demonstrates is the limited nature of any understanding which attempts to find the meaning in the symbolism of the action or item itself, rather than its relationship to other action sets. This latter approach has been presented as the structural approach, and it is that which I wish to pursue further at this juncture.

AGNATES / AFFINES; FATHER / MATERNAL UNCLE

The opposition between the maternal uncle and the father in the *samskara* rituals has repeatedly been noticed. Both the father and the *mama* appear to have a special relationship with the child undergoing the rituals, which is more than merely financial responsibility. The differences between this relationship can be more clearly seen by listing the ritual contexts in which they appear:

mama to *bhanja* (maternal uncle to nephew)

(1) *birth:* mama gives *tamol* to *bhanja* (whereas father has no ritual contact)
(2) (niskarma: theoretically it is the *mama* who first shows the sun to his *bhanja*)
(3) jater: although father usually comes too, the groom goes to his *mama's* shrine with his *mama* to pray for sons
(4) *prasahi:* the *mama* provides the water at the gate through which the women establish groom in patrilineage
(5) *rira:* both mamas provide clothes for both bride and groom
(6) *bidha: mama* carries bride to her *doli*
(7) *sola:* the *mama* as chief *kuram* ties the chief mourner's turban, re-establishing the lineage.

bhai to *bahn* (brother to sister)

(1) pregnancy: brother provides fruit symbolic of child
(2) marriage: brother gives fruit to sister, stains shawl red, competes with groom, and accompanies groom and bride

father to *child*

(1) *mundan:* cuts child's hair
(2) *savgan*: betrothal arrangements
(3) *jater:* may attend the *puja* for progeny with *mama*
(4) *sand:* part of *puja* along with *mama*
(5) *kanyadan:* father gives bride — or at least received merit for it
(6) *devta pherne:* father accompanies couple in their *pujas* at local shrines.

From these lists, it is apparent that both the father and the *mama* participate in the child's rituals, but the *mama's* role seems both more frequent and more important. The ambiguity suggests that both are considered to have ritualclaims on the child. The most striking aspect of the *mama's* role is his necessity in order to install the groom in the patrilineage and to re-establish the patrilineage after it has been broken off by death. This is in contrast to the father's position in the marriage, where, although the *mama* pays half the expenses, the father and his ancestors are considered to receive the religious merit (*pun*) from the *kanyadan*.

The patrilineage is pure (it receives the merit); while the affines are required to maintain the patrilineage. The gift of the brother's fruit to his sister, the reddening of her shawl, the conflict with the groom, all tend to indicate that this maintenance extends as symbolically as the intercourse which produces the patrilineage's children. However, this is not only incest of the worst sort in Hindu society, it also calls into question the patrilineage as a blood line. This is contradictory, not only to overt values and physiological knowledge, but to the concept of patrilineage itself. Thus the ambiguity and the conflicting roles. At no time is the father not recognized as the source of the child's "seed"; however, the covert recognition of the *mama's* role in maintaining the fertility of the paternal line is everywhere present. This opposition will be further illuminated below and through the following analysis of the *Gugga* myth.

FASTING / EATING

Associated with the opposition between the agnates and the affines is the opposition between fasting and eating. When death forces a break in the patrilineage, a fast ensues. Although a complete fast is only maintained until after cremation, a "semi-fast" is maintained until the *sola* ceremony, for only moderately pure foods are eaten. Here again, as in the tying of the turban, it is the *kuran* in-laws who break the fast by preparing the food which includes less pure items such as garlic, onions, and perhaps even meat, and serving it to the mourners. Thus, again, it is the affinal relations who introduce the impurity to the pure fasting patrilineage, i.e. agnates are to affines as purity is to impurity.

However, fasting is not only purity, it is anti-life (death), for without food natural organisms are not able to survive. Thus the *kuram* are not only introducing the impurity of normal existence, they are introducing or re-establishing the process of living — or natural life itself. Reading ":" as "is to", and ": :" as "as", this leaves us with

father : **mother's brother**
: : patrilineage : *kuram*
: : fasting : eating
: : purity : pollution
: : death : life

However, this involves a contradiction of values. The Hindu religious system places positive value on purity and fasting — yet eating (and impurity) appear to be necessary for survival.

UNCUT HAIR / CUT HAIR; LOOSENED HAIR / PARTED HAIR

Although no longer involving the *father/mama* opposition directly, a similar opposition of terms is found in "untouched hair"/ "touched hair". Uncut hair is found among males prior to the *mundan* tonsure ceremony, whereas cut hair appears in the *samskaras* as a result of the *mundan*, and following a death. The latter instance, though, can better be understood as the extreme of cut hair in that it is shaving the head. Previously, it was noted that the *mundan* tonsure represented a partial entrance into society and was sometimes used as a criterion for cremation rather than burial. Previous to this the child's relationship to society (both ritually and socially) was one of opposition through lack of defining status. This suggests that uncut hair also can be seen in opposition to society — a suggestion strongly supported by the fact that the other persons in the Hindu world who have uncut hair are the *sadhus* and saints who also are outside of society, and who also are buried. In contrast, the regular cutting of hair is a mark of those who are defined by society (socially and ritually). The analogy may also be drawn between cutting hair and eating food; it is only through constant harvesting (cutting of the grain) that food and life is maintained. That is, the constant cutting of hair is like the regenerative (and cyclical) value of repeatedly cutting crops — it is through this cyclical process that growth is maintained. Shaving the head following death appears to reflect this same notion of cyclical existence in which growth only follows cutting, and rebirth follows death. In short, *samsara.*

This leaves us with a situation which relates back to the former notions of outside society (burial)/ inside society (cremation). For cremation is indicative of future rebirth (*samsara*) while the burial of saints is a permanent move outside of *samsara* through union with *Paramatma* and many children also leave *samsara* as ghosts. (This will be elaborated further at a later point.) Expressed graphically, this division of ideas results in the following parallel oppositions:

uncut hair : cut hair
outside society : inside society
burial : cremation
anti-samsara : *samsara* (cyclical death and rebirth)

The opposition between loosened hair and parted (combed) hair among women in the *samskara* rituals illustrates the same structure with different content. According to previous analysis, parted hair represents fertility (the parting of the public hairs); whereas loosened hair represents death. However, this death is not the cyclical death which appeared above, but the death of fertility. It is the combing and the parting of the hair which is indicative of the cycle of fertility. The death of a women's husband is a permanent halting of this fertility. Thus loosened hair/ parted hair is once again infertility/fertility, or death/life. The fact that death has appeared in both sides of the column is indicative of a) the fact that there are different kinds of "death", and b) it is not the term which is constant, but the relation between them.

SANYASI / GHRISTI

The opposition between the *sanyasi* (the renouncer, i.e. *sadhu*, *yogi*) and the *ghristi* (the householder) is implicit in the opposing categories of hair discussed above. However, it is more explicitly found in the *janeo* (sacred thread) ceremony, in which the groom becomes a *sadhu* (a *sanyasi*) for a while. During the discussion of this ritual, the contradiction between the necessity to become a *brahmacharia* (celibate) in order to become a householder was noted. But celibacy also means the retention of semen; while being a householder requires just the opposite. As mentioned earlier, retention of semen is also retention of strength; whereas its loss precipitates weakness. Thus, there is:

sanyasi : **ghristi**
: : celibacy : intercourse
: : retention of semen : loss of semen
: : (strength) : (weakness)

However, this constitutes a fundamental contradiction. Celibacy results in strength, intercourse in weakness; but it is only through intercourse that progency are gained (a strength of another kind). This contradiction is further complicated (or simplified) by the concommitant purity/pollution relation. Celibacy is pure; intercourse is polluting. The lineage and life itself is only maintained through the pollution of intercourse; whereas the strength and power which leads to religious purity and freedom (*moksa*) necessitates the avoidance of intercourse. This contradiction in different forms is of central importance to Hinduism, and will be further delineated in the analysis of myth of follow.

At this point it is possible to note several other oppositions expressed in the *Samskara* cycle which cluster around the poles of *sanyasi / ghristi*. The *sanyasi* is one who gains power not only through retention of semen, but through austerities. These austerities are referred to as *tapas*, which also means heat, bringing to mind the special relationship of the *brahmacharia* to fire. In opposition to this is fertility on the natural order, which is at times associated with water — the cooling force which is a complementary opposition to fire. Fire/water, though, may occur in ritual contexts in which fire cannot necessarily be identified with austerity and water with fertility, although the relation fire/water is constant.

Given the kind of oppositions presented above that have been isolated as the primary relations in the *samskara* ritual cycle, two questions become pertinent: 1) how are these oppositions related to each other ? and 2) how do the rituals deal with these oppositions ?

In answer to the first question, it must be recalled that similar structures within the system are not only found on one "level of reality" but on many. Thus when oppositions are grouped around a particular relation, the terms may be to a certain extent interchangeable; but as soon as the focus is changed to another "level" it may not be possible to exchange terms. In each case the basic structural relation is identical (although refocused), even if the terms are not.

In adapting Levi-Strauss' analysis of myth to ritual, Nur Yalman has written:

> in a similar fashion, rituals are also centered around basic contradictions such as pollution and purity, fortune and misfortune, health and illness, and appear to be attempts to turn one side of an "opposed category" into the other. (Yalman: 1964, 117)

The oppositions which have been found in the rituals have been found precisely because they represent the underlying structure of the rituals. These oppositions, although understood by the anthropologist as opposing categories, are expressed in the rituals because they represent the central problems and conflicts within a culture — problems which arise from inherent contradictions within the people's symbolic and social structures.

Thus each ritual and the ritual system as a whole can be seen in part as "attempts to turn one side of an 'opposed category' into the other" on various different levels. For example, on the initial level, marriage ceremonies can be seen as attempts to turn the category "unmarried" into "married"; the *samuts* as attempts to turn "impure" into "pure"; the death ceremonies as attempts to turn "life" into "death", "this world" into "the other world", "body" into "soul" — in other words, the same transitions which have been examined with each individual ritual.

On "deeper" or less conscious structural levels, the rituals are attempts to resolve the contradictions in the oppositions sketched above. Thus the rituals are seen as attempts to resolve (if only by representing them) fundamental oppositions such as that between the patrilineage and the *kuran*, the *sanyasi* and *ghristi*, celibate austerity and polluting fertility, etc. In a sense, these may be understood as attempts to turn one side into another, but in that they are only "attempts", that is, in that the contradictions they deal with remain contradictions, one side is never completely turned into the other. Rather, the specific situation that the ritual is dealing with defines the terms in which some kind of resolution is achieved.

Often, as will be seen even more clearly in the brief analysis of myths, this resolution is achieved through a "mediator (s)" or a "mediating force". This, then, is the function of the Brahman *purohit* on one level, and *Agni* (the *havan* fire) on another. The *purohit* mediates between humans and gods, this world and the next, purity and pollution, males and females, etc. Similarly, *Agni* mediates between purity and pollution, uncut hair and cut hair, *sanyasi* and *ghristi*, austerity and fertility, unmarried and married, agnates and affines, body and soul, etc. By spanning the categories (i.e. communicating and participating in both in a manner which is revealed through myth analysis) the *purohit* and *Agni* are crucial elements in the resolutions which the rituals attempt to accomplish.

CHAPTER IV

MYTHIC STRUCTURES

The previous chapter attempted to reveal some of the primary structural features of the *samskara* rituals, and through them, some of the basic structural contradictions contained in Hindu society and thought. This chapter attempts the same kind of understanding through the analysis of several myths of local importance in the Sunhet area — though variations can be found throughout Northern India. By representing the same structures that were found in the rituals, the analysis of these myths should further amplify and clarify our understanding of those structures and thus the religion and society of Kangra Hindus. For myths, perhaps even more clearly than rituals, reveal "antagonisms which are inherent in the structure of (a) society" and its thought. (Levi-Strauss: 1958, 27) Levi-Strauss has said that

> Myth is language, functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically at "taking off" from the linguistic ground on which it keeps on rolling. (1963: 206)

Understood in this sense of "highly-charged" language, myth is a form of communication; it is saying something. And its constituent units are not words or phonemes, but what Levi-Strauss calls "gross constituent units" made up of "bundles of relations". These "bundles of relations" are basically sentences which may be juxtaposed in opposing categories to reveal the structure of the myth. That is, the myth communicates by expressing synchronic contradictions and oppositions in the diachronic form of a story.

Often, the contradictions represented appear exaggerated, and the opposing positions appear in the form of extreme ideals or actions. However, these extreme positions are not necessarily direct reflections of reality, but rather indirect expressions of the central contradictions seen in reality expressed in their extreme ideal forms in order to show their essential irreconcilability. Extreme solutions are imagined, says Levi-Strauss, in order to show them to be untenable.

Myths do, nevertheless, attempt some sort of resolutions. In part this occurs through its sheer expression. More analytically, however, resolution is affected through the introduction of mediating categories.

> Mediation is always achieved by introducing a third category which is "abnormal" or "anomalous" in terms of ordinary "rational" categories. (Leach in Middleton: 1967, 4)

That is, the opposing categories are not absorbed into a resolution, but "bridged". Since the bridging is shown to be essentially impossible, these mediating categories must necessarily have non-normal characteristics, and cannot represent a real solution in terms of society — but rather, a mythic solution. In fact, this is seen as the function of myth — to communicate essential contradictions on a level where resolutions are possible. This understanding of the mythological function may in turn help explain the universality and enduring power of myths.

The myths to be extensively considered are three: the Gugga myth, the Baba Deot sidh myth, and the Baba Balak Rupi myth. All three are well known in Sunhet. Each of these myths is about divinities of the second order, that is, saints who at some point in the past are considered to have had a human origin. If it were not for the appearance of the saint Gorakhnath in both the Gugga and Deot Sidh myths, and the supposed brotherhood of Deot Sidh and Balak Rupi, these myths would at first appear to be unrelated phenomena of a similar order. However, I think that they are more inter-dependent than they seem, and that each is rendered more intelligible by the other. In fact, the two Nath myths (Baba Deot Sidh is also called Baba Balak Nath, and Baba Balak Rupi is called Balak Rupi Nath) appear to be closely linked with the whole Nath movement of Northern India and in a kind of counterpoint relationship to the Gugga myth, for the Nath myths will be seen to contain various biases of the celibate Nath sectarian movement in partial opposition to the Gugga myth of traditional (*sanatana*) Hinduism. The following analysis, then, will be concerned not only with the particular meaning dimensions of each myth, but with a larger perspective which ties the myths together into the fabric of Kangra Hinduism.

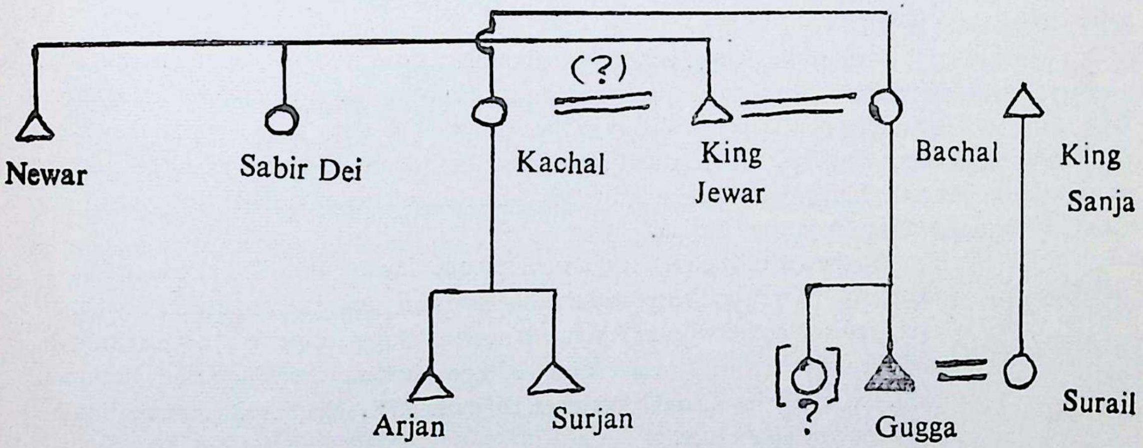
A. GUGGA MYTH

In the second chapter, reference was made to the existence of a Gugga temple in Sunhet village, and the prevalence of his worship throughout Kangra. In fact, Gugga is known and worshipped over much of the Punjab and as far away as Rajasthan and Utter Pradesh. In the neighboring Chamba Valley he is worshipped as *Mundilk*, and as Gugga is even considered the author of the famous Chamba temples (Goetz: 1955). Speculation based on references to wars with Muslims or to the Mahmud of Ghazni have placed Gugga as a historical figure either around the tenth or the fifteenth century (Rose: 1919; Temple: 1884). However, there is no real evidence for Gugga as a historical figure, and I feel it is not really needed in order to understand the Gugga myth and its widespread acceptance.

Depending on where and from whom the myth was collected, there are a number of versions of the Gugga story. However, most of these appear to be the same version told in greater or lesser detail. The variations which do occur are usually small, but always revealing — either as a restatement or a refocusing of the same issue. Thus, following Levi-Strauss, these variations will be considered.

The most complete version of the myth is found in the poem-play collected by Temple (1884) from the Ambala District of the Punjab. Aside from translating the myth into poetic dialogue, this play only differed from the versions of the myth I collected in Sunhet (100 miles away) by a few philosophical references and literary embellishments. Therefore, it is the Sunhet version which is given below.

As the myth involves a fairly complicated kinship situation, it is best that it be made clear at the outset.



King Jewar and his (favourite) wife, Bachal, were without issue. For this reason they felt very sad, and spent much time in religious devotion.

One day, the saint Guru Gorakhnath came to Bachal's garden in order to do his meditations. Upon hearing this, Bachal approached the saint with a petition for a son. Gorakhnath refused, but Bachal was steadfast in her devotion, and served him for twelve year. Finally, Gorakhnath relented and made an appointment to see Bachal. However, Kachal, her sister and co-wife (this is not clear) heard of it, and assumed her sister's place by donning her clothes. Gorakhnath, intending to reward Bachal, thus inadvertently rewarded Kachal and gave her two seeds (or barley-corns, or flowers).

When Bachal appeared on the scene, she found that she had been tricked by her sister. However, she eventually convinced Guru Gorakhnath of her sister's deceit, and he also gave her the boon of a son (through a root, some dirt, or ashes).

In the seventh month of pregnancy, Sabir Dei, King Jewar's sister, accused Bachal of having had sexual relations with the jogi (Guru Gorakhnath) and set her brother's mind against his wife. King Jewer, though, did not have the heart to kill her, so he sent her to her father's house to the north.

On the road to her father's house, Bachal's cart was stopped for the midday rest, and the cows were released to graze. The cows were then bitten by a snake, and died. This upset Bachal greatly, and she wept so much she fell asleep. While asleep, Gugga spoke to her from her womb and told her to cut off a branch from a nim tree and call on Gorakhnath to heal the cows. Upon awaking, she did this, and the cows were cured.

After Bachal reached her home, she related to her mother all that had happened, and added the fact that Gugga still had not been born even though he was twelve months pregnant. At this point, Gugga spoke up again, and protested that he would be forever disgraced if he were born in the house of his maternal grandfather.

Meanwhile, King Jewar repented of his actions, and had sent a messenger to fetch Bachal back to her husband's house. Half-way back, Gugga was finally born at midnight. Bachal and Gugga then returned to their house where they were welcomed by the King, and after initial hesitations, Gugga was made the heir to the kingdom — although by this time Bachal's sister Kachal had given birth to twins, Arjan and Surjan.

At the age of twelve, Gugga went out one day to hunt. There he met a Brahman lady at a well and requested that she give him some water to drink. She, however, refused as he was a Rajput. Angered, Gugga appealed to Gorakhnath, and then shot arrows through both of her pitchers, drenching the Brahman lady. Extremely insulted the Brahman lady cursed Gugga despite intervention on his behalf by his mother.

Later, King Jewar made engagement arrangements with King Sanja for his daughter Surail to marry Gugga. But just before the time for the marriage Jewar died. Hearing this, King Sanja sent a note to Gugga calling off the marriage due to the inauspiciousness of the death. Gugga became very distressed, and went into the jungle where he met Bisak Nag, the king of the snakes. Bisak Nag agreed to help Gugga and set off to King Sanja's house. There, he stole into the garden, and bit Surial, the prospective bride. Then he appeared to the greatly agitated household in the form of a Brahman who was able to cure snake bites. Before curing Surial, though, he extracted the promise that the marriage with Gugga would continue. King Sanja gave the promise on the condition that Gugga arrive there (a very great distance) in seven days. Through the help of Gorakhnath, Gugga was able to fulfill this condition, and married Surial.

Some time afterwards, Gugga went to visit his twin half-brothers Arjan and Surjan. They demanded a part of the property from him. But Gugga refused, as that would mean dividing the kingdom and the household. The twins then went hunting with Gugga and treacherously attacked him. But Gugga won the fight and ended up slaying his twin brothers.

Gugga then returned home with the heads tied to the saddle of his horse. After meeting his mother and telling her what had happened, she cursed him and said that she never wanted to see Gugga again.

Distraught, Gugga appealed to the Mother Earth to swallow him. But the Earth refused because he was not a Hindu, and only Muslims are buried. Gugga

> then went to the Muslim saint Rattan Haji and the water-god Khawja Khizr (cf. chapter two) where he learned the Muslim creed. He was then swallowed by the Earth.
>
> It is also stated that after his last disappearance into the earth, he used to visit his wife at night until he was finally caught by his mother. From that point on, he only went to visit his wife once a year on the day called Gugga Naumi ("ninth"), the same day he comes to visit his temple and possesses the temple priest (cf. chapter two).

Relations between kin are clearly a central issue in this myth, and it is in this realm that we may expect to find the basic oppositions. However, the myth as recorded here, includes a number of self-contained anecdotes or embellishments which do not appear in all versions, nor appear to be essential to the story. In fact, they bear directly on any understanding of the central "message" but in that they usually do so through the expression of supplementary oppositions on different levels such as the linguistic and the geographical, they will be considered separately. The following analysis, then, will not necessarily always proceed according to the sequential logic of the story.

STERILITY / OVER-FERTILITY

The initial opposition in the myth is between sterility and fertility. Both Bachal and her sister, Kachal, are infertile, and King Jewar has no male heir, a serious situation in Hindu society. Through Guru Gorakhnath this is changed; but there is a mistake — Kachal receives the boon intended for Bachal and the result is over-fertility in the form of twins. The birth of Gugga after a clearing up of the confusion is an attempted resolution on this level. It cannot succeed, though, for much more is at stake. Thus in a version from Gurgaon (Rose: 1884) the miraculous fertility of even Gugga's birth is emphasized by the simultaneous birth of a colt to a barren mare, and sons to a barren *Chamari* (low-caste woman) and *Brahmani* (Brahman woman).

The over-fertility of the twins Arjan and Surjan represents an extreme solution to the problem of fertility which is equally unsatisfactory. On this level, then, it is possible to see Gugga's murder of the twins as an attempt to rectify the balance. However, in killing the twins, he goes too far, and is likewise banished. As O'Flaherty says of Saivite Mythology,

> The conflict is resolved not into a static solution but rather into a constant motion of a pendulum, whose animating force is the eternal paradox of the myths. (O'Flaherty: 1969, 41)

PATERNITY: HUMAN / SAINTLY; AFFINAL / AGNATAL; NATURAL / SUPERNATURAL

The solution of the problem of sterility through the agency of Gorakhnath contains within it the germs of the next (sequentially speaking) conflict. Bachal's pregnancy through the Guru's intervention casts doubt on the future child's paternity and King Jewar's role, setting up an opposition between Jewar and Gorakhnath, the saint. On a more abstract level, this is the opposition between human/and supra-human origin. For Sabir Dei (King Jewar's sister), while on the most literal level expressing the commonly found fear regarding the behavior of wandering yogi and saints regarding the women who always have access to them, is also showing the doubt that conception can come from spiritual sources. This doubt gives this contradiction its living tension, a tension which will become clearer as the nature of this contradiction human origin / supernatural origin is delineated throughout the chapter.

This expression of the question of paternity in turn generates the next. Bachal is sent to her natal home in the North, the direction one always goes for "good" brides in Kangra and the Punjab. There Gugga refuses to be born in the home of his maternal grandfather for fear of extreme disgrace. In a version collected in Bijnor (Rose: 1884) he declares that this is because he would be called a Nanwar (nana=maternal grand-father; *war*=derived from). Gugga fears that he may be derived in the male line from his maternal side as well. Thus the opposition matrilineal fatherhood/agnatal fatherhood. King Jewar's fatherhood is in doubt, but the other extreme, fatherhood through the maternal side, is equally unsatisfactory. Indeed, it is a matter of disgrace, a matter which is socially wrong—as in fact incest most definitely is.

Rose speaks of this reaction on Gugga's part as "a curious detail" for, he continues, "In the Punjab it is the rule, at least in certains parts, for a wife to go to her parent's home for her first confinement" and attempts to explain it on the basis of historical changes (Rose: 1884, 173). In Kangra it is also the rule, however, for the bride to always return for her first birth. That Gugga should, then, express possible disgrace over this situation does not call for a fictitious history, but, rather lends credence to the opposition stated above in which maternal paternity is considered a real option. Indeed, Gugga's inversion of the reality suggests that the myth is giving expression to unconscious conflicts in this regard.

Further statements of this same opposition are found in a version from Chamba. In it, King Jewar's father refuses to take the place of his son as Gugga's father in the marriage. Bachal then tries to persuade her own father, but he also refuses. In fact, the death of Jewar precisely at the marriage time when he is needed to carry through the arrangements as Gugga's father, again suggests that his paternity is called into question.

In the myth, the resolution of this opposition between matrilineal and agnatal paternity is attempted geographically and astrologically. Gugga is born half-way between the two homes, and at midnight, half-way between the two days. This resolution does not remove the conflict. It merely makes resolution on the mythological level by striking a balance which denies the validity of either position.

The incident with the Brahman lady in which Gugga drenches her by shooting an arrow through her water pot after she has refused to serve him (in another version followed up by beating her husband with a leather shoe i. e. even more degrading) refocuses attention on the initial paternity opposition by calling into question Gugga's status as a Rajput. Gugga's expectation of being served and the outrageousness of his actions points up his singular origin — for actions such as his are outside of the permissible norms for a Rajput boy, particularly with the implied sexual symbolism.

We already have Jewar paternity/supernatural paternity and Jewar paternity/Nana (maternal grandfather) paternity. However, now we have Nana paternity/supernatural paternity. Thus reading ":" as "is to" and ": :" as "as", we have,

Jewar paternity : supernatural paternity : : Nana paternity :

supernatural paternity (which suggests)
Jewar paternity + Nana paternity/supernatural paternity (or)
human paternity/ supernatural paternity

In Gugga's case, it would indeed appear that all four of these oppositions are valid communications of the ambiguous and contradictory nature of his paternity. For supernatural paternity is here symbolized by: a seed, a *gugal* incense plant, some dirt from the brow of Brahman, or some ashes — all symbols related to the earth. Similarly, after Gugga's rejection by his mother, it is to the Earth in the explicit form of "mother earth" that Gugga appeals to swallow him. Thus, the real opposition becomes human origin/Earth origin, which contains in it a reflection of the opposition between the cultural and the natural orders, such that the extreme position of Earth origin is in the end modified by the interference of the cultural order (the Hindu/Muslim division).

Seemingly, we have come full circles. Initially we had Jewar paternity : spiritual paternity : : natural : cultural whereas now we have human origin : Earth origin : : cultural : natural. However, I suspect that it is precisely this paradox in which natural fertility can be understood in both ways as requiring a father, and not requiring a father, which may underlie some of the contradictions experienced in Hindu society and religion.

However that may be, it is necessary to examine the ambiguity which surrounds the kinship relations between Gugga and the twins in order to understand the implications of the paternity question in the Gugga myth. In addition to the paternal ambiguity, the different versions of the myth indicate that a good deal of confusion surrounds the exact nature of the relationships between Kachal and Jewar, Bachal and the twins, and Gugga and the twins.

It is unclear whether Kachal is also married to King Jewar: one version explicitly affirms it, one denies it, and rest ignore the issue. This confusion extends to the relationship between Bachal and the twins. Is Bachal merely their aunt, or do they have a common paternity which would include them within the extended family, and make them in some sense her sons ? This is explicitly stated in a version collected by Rose (1884, 176) where Arjan and Surjan ask Bachal, "Are we to call you Mother or Aunt ? You are our *dharm ki ma*". *Dharm ki ma* literally means "mother by *dharm*, or the religious order", and local informants stated that it could mean adopted mother. However, that interpretation is ambiguous, for there is no corresponding term for adopted father; and I suggest that it could equally well mean mother through religious sources, or common spiritual paternity.

Thus the possible kinship relations between Gugga and the twins can be of three kinds: 1) through the sister relationship of their mothers only, or, in addition to that 2) common human paternity (either from paternal or maternal side), or 3) common origin through the Earth, and the agency of Guru Gorakhnath, a possibility strengthened by the fact that Gugga calls his horse, who was born of the same dirt, "my brother." The importance of this confusion lies in the fact that it is in essence questioning the whole validity of the patrilineal system of descent and the proper relations between kin by expressing or re-presenting the contradictions within the system.

There is no resolution; Gugga must err in over-stressing or under-stressing blood relations no matter how the problem is posed. Thus in most versions, the twins demand a share of the land, or, over-stepping the boundaries, all of the land or even Gugga's wife for themselves. Or else they plot to kill him. In other versions, though, it is Gugga who oversteps the bounds such as in his action with the Brahman lady, and provokes the fatal fight in which blood relations which have been over-stressed are fatally under-stressed. Either way Bachal cannot permit the extreme solution, and an uneasy balance is achieved by banishing Gugga, who still occasionally returns. Even in the issue of patrilocal marriage, the opposition between the paternal and the maternal kin is expressed in one version in which Gugga marries a girl from Bengal (thought of as a place where there is much *jadu* or magic) and by sorcery is forcibly restrained there for the first ten years of marriage in what amounts to a matrilocal marriage.

SUPPLEMENTARY OPPOSITIONS

All of the versions except one refer to Mother Earth's refusal to accept Gugga as a Hindu, and most suggest that he become a Muslim in order to become acceptable. The Gurgoan version, though, also presents Gugga with the option of becoming a *yogi* or saint. Thus, the Hindu/Muslim and normal Hindu/yogi Hindu oppositions reflect the cremation/burial contrast:

Hindu : Muslim : : Hindu : yogi : : cremation : burial

The myth's construction of the oppositions in this way strikingly demonstrates chapter three's interpretation of the death rituals, as well as the unique Indian-Hindu ability to see differences in religion as merely differing customs (H.=*riti-rawaj*) all ultimately valid, i.e. from the point of view of Mother Earth. Historically, I would hazard the guess that this particular opposition found inclusion primarily due to the co-existence of Hindus and Muslims and their co-belief in Gugga — who was also called by the Muslims Zahir Pir. The lack of the mythical incident in Chamba where the number of Muslims was always miniscule seems to support that view.

Surprisingly enough, Gugga is remembered by many Rajputs in Kangra today primarily as a Rajput warrior, who in his battle with his twin brothers, also fought the Muslims in some versions. This may reflect the Kangra Rajput's relatively recent self-image as an important martial caste.

MEDIATION

In an effort to get at what appeared to me to be the central communication of the Gugga myth, Gugga's relationship with the snake world was necessarily slighted. This relationship is not at once clear. Noting that Gugga's shrines are always associated with worship for the protection from or curing of snake bites, Rose felt that the justification for this worship from the myth was slight. It is only noted in some versions that Gugga has power over snake bites (in the cow incident) and relations with snake-gods (as aids in securing the betrothal). In part, the answer must wait until later.

At this point, though, it is possible to note the snakes' roles as mediators, and their chthonic associations. For the snakes are the anomalous categories par excellence: they provide both life and death; they are both human and non-human; animal and divine. They are able to span the categories and provide transitions between the poles of an opposition — a function which will become clearer later.

The other mediator is Guru Gorakhnath. He mediates between sterility and fertility, this world and the other world, male and female, dead cows and live cows, and changes the impossible conditions of marriage into the possible. In a sense, though, he is only a mediating agency, and it is Gugga himself who bounces back and forth between the poles of different categories, who does the actual mediating. Perhaps herein lies the reason for his worship, for unlike other gods worshipped, he is not a saint or a *yogi*, or of divine origin, but merely a Rajput warrior.

B. THE NATH CULT

The word "Nath" means "lord" or "master" or "the rope that passes through a bullock's nose". It is used to designate a particular breed of saints associated with the figure of Gorakhnath, said to be the disciple of Matsyendra Nath who in the form of a fish heard the sacred teachings given to the sleeping Parvati by Siva, the Adinatha, or "Original Nath". These Naths are the patron saints of several sects of *yogis*, which are spread over the whole of North India, including Bengal and Nepal. The most well-known of these sects is the *Kanphata Yogis*, so called because they split their ears in order to wear large earrings (*kan*=ear, *phata*=split).

The history of the cult is obscure. (Briggs: 1938 and Dasqupta: 1962). Gorakhnath, or at any rate, myths about followers of Gorakhnath, seemed to have appeared about the eleventh century. However, there are no real life-stories about Gorakhnath, rather, just a few isolated incidents in which he appears. Nevertheless, the philosophy and practice of *kundalini hatha yoga,* which will become relevant later, is associated with his name and practised by his followers along with a (generally) celibate tradition.

As far as I was able to ascertain, the Nath cult in its *Kanphata* form is not found in Kangra. However, the Gosains, a celibate Shaivite sect with many practices which would seem to link them to the *Kanphata Yogis* did establish themselves strongly in Kangra, especially at Jvala Mukhi. This may help to explain certain aspects of the myths concerning the two local Nath saints, Baba Balak Nath and Balak Rupi Nath— saints whose domain does not extent very far beyond the district of Kangra.

BABA BALAK NATH (OR) BABA DEOT SIDH

Aside from the version of the myth collected in the field, I was only able to locate two other versions, which will also be given as they are extremely short. The following is from Sunhet:

Version 1

There was a very pious Brahman woman who spent all her time in devotion and lived a celibate Brahmacharia life. As she had some cows which needed tending, she hired Balak Nath (*balak*=boy) to be her cow herd, for which she paid him in *lassi* (curds-drink) and *roti* (unleaven wheat-bread).

But Balak was "a sort of incarnation of Siva" and spent all his time in meditation under a tree. Consequently the cows wandered free and ate up the wheat growing in nearby fields.

Finding their wheat fields eaten, the farmers angrily went to the Brahman lady and demanded to know why she let her cows wander around untended. The Brahmani in turn called in Balak and accused him of eating all her *lassi* and *roti* while letting the cows eat from the farmer's wheat-fields.

Balak replied, "What fields have the cows eaten ? Show them to me; they are not eaten." So the Brahmani and the farmers went out to the fields to look. When they got there they found all the wheat was as before and none had been eaten.

Balak then took the lady to a tree trunk and pointed to the hollow, "There is all the *roti* you gave to me"; and took her to a pond (*tala*) which was full of *lassi* saying, "And there is all the *lassi* you gave to me — I have taken neither."

Then Balak went away to Hamirpur District where he met Baba Gorakh Nath, the famous saint. This Guru, seeing that Balak was a cow-herd, said that he and his disciples were in desperate need of milk. So Balak asked them to bring a pot and went over to a cow. He put the pot underneath, and the milk flowed by itself and even after the pan was filled continued to flow. At this the Guru knew that the boy had some *shakti* (power) and wanted him to become his disciple. But Balak refused.

As Balak would not join, Gorakhnath's disciples prevailed upon the Guru to show his own power (*shakti*). For Balak went so far as to say he had stronger power. So the Guru threw up a *chatri* (an umbrella-like object which is often put over gods and saints) to where it remained in the air and dared Balak to bring it down. Balak threw up a pair of fire thongs (*cimtas* — used by holy men) which cut the *chatri* into pieces (more than 50) which came falling down while the *cimtas* remained up.

After this, the Guru Gorakh Nath wanted him as a disciple even more, but Balak and one of the Guru's disciples who could manage it, flew away to a cave (*gopha*) at the site of the present temple. Here he sat in years of meditation and finally went into *samadhi*.

Version 2 (Rose: 1884, 279)

Baba Balak Nath was born in the house of a Gaur Brahman at Girnar Parbat. He was the disciple of Ridgir Saniasi, and wandered to Changar Talai in Bilaspur where he became the cow-herd of a woman of the Lohar (black-smith) caste. Some Jogis attempted to convert him and pierce his ears by force, but he refused to abandon his faith and called aloud, whereupon a rock close by split open and he disappeared into the cleft, in which he is supposed to be still alive, though he was born 300 years ago . . . . The priests are Giri Gosain who are celibate.

Version 3 (Rose, 279)

Start same as last, but instead of some Jogis, it is a party of Gosains (who) tried to persuade him to join their sect because they saw his sleeping form over-shadowed by a cloud while the rest of the land was exposed to the sun. But he fled and when pursued disappeared in the earth. At the spot a Brahman and a Jat afterwards found a lamp burning: whence his name of Dewat ("lamp").

Variation: Balak is said to have sucked milk from an uncalved cow.

This myth represents a different genre of myth than that exhibited by Gugga. It is a sectarian myth predicated on the other myths and symbols of the sect, in this case, the mythology of Siva, Gorakhnath, and the Naths and the Hatha yoga world of the Gosains. Its communication is coded to certain wider keys; unlike the Gugga myth it does not proceed through well-delineated oppositions and resolutions. Thus, this analysis will only attempt to pick up the main message and work towards building up the larger context by examining some of the inter-relationships with other myths.

The central issue of the myth revolves around the opposition sustenance through meditation/sustenance through normal work, or meditation power/normal power, or "isn't meditation an anti-social activity ?". The myth represents the opposition in the form of both extremes: the destruction of the wheat by the wandering cows while Balak meditates, and the super-restoration of the field plus all the wheat and milk that was given to Balak.

However, all is not lost for the position that normal work is necessary for sustenance. Balak is not a normal cow-herd in a normal situation. He is "a sort of incarnation of Siva" or pure origin working for a highly pure Brahman devotee lady who is celibate (and thus in no way compromises Balak's situation). As such, he has a great deal of power that is manifested through his control over milk. This milk symbolism is important and will become clearer at a later point. The notion of Balak's power, though, brings him into conflict with the Gorkhnaths (or) the Gosains — a conflict which can be best understood by examining the Balak Rupi Nath myth.

BALAK RUPI NATH ("having-the-shape-of-a-boy-Nath) (Rose: 262)

> One day Jogu, the grandson of the ex-purohit Ganesha Brahman, went to his fields with a plough on his shoulder. There he met a young Gosain (Balak Rupi) who asked him if he would serve him. Jogu consented, whereupon the Gosain told him not to tell anyone what had happened. When Jogu reached the fields he began to dance involuntarily, saying he did not know where he left his plow. The men in the fields told him it was on his shoulder and asked what was the matter. Jugu told them the story, but when he finished, he became mad. Ganesha, his father, then took some cotton thread and went to a Gosain called Kanthar Nath, who recited some mantras, blew on the thread, put it around Jogu and partially affected a cure. He informed Ganesha that the Gosain Jogu had met was Baba Balak Nath, and that he had been afflicted because he had betrayed the Baba.
>
> Kanthar Nath and Ganesha met up with Baba Lal Puri, a mahatma of Ganyar Ganjhar, and they began searching for Baba Balak Nath. Baba Lal Puri told Ganesha to cut down a rose bush which stood near to a temple to Gugga, and dig beneath it. After digging about four or five cubits, the spade struck a flat stone (*pindi* — a common representation of a god), and blood began to ooze out until the pit was filled. But then the blood stopped and milk began to flow out of it. Next came a stream of saffron which was followed by a flame (*jot*) of incense and finally by a current of water. Baba Lal Puri said that all these were signs of Baba Balak Rupi. He then took the idol (*pindi*)

to Neogal Nadi in order to bathe it, whereupon milk again began to issue from it. On its way back, the idol moved by itself from the palanquin to a nearby temple pond, but they eventually took it back to its source.

During the night it was revealed to Baba Lal Puri in a vision that Gugga's temple must be demolished and its remains cast into Negal Kund or used in building a temple to Balak Rupi. Accordingly the idol was stationed on the place pointed out. Indoor *pujari* duties were to be held by Jogu and his descendants, while outdoor duties were to be performed by Kanthar Nath.

The first person to make a vow at the temple was Raja Abhi Chand, and soon after his wife gave birth to a son.

A Rajput girl was once told by her brother's wife to graze cattle, and on her refusing, the latter said, "Yes, it is beneath your dignity to graze cattle because you are a Rani (queen); be sure you will not be married to a Raja." The girl in distress at this taunt untied the cattle and led them to the jungle. At that time Baba Balak Rupi had again become manifest. The girl supplicated him and said that she would not believe him to be really Balak Rupi unless she married a Raja, adding that if her desire were fullfilled she would offer a bullock of copper at his temple. Five or seven days had not elapsed when a Raja of the Katoch dynasty chanced to pass by where the girl was herding cattle, and seeing her he bade her to be taken to his seraglio, where he married her. Unfortunately, the girl forgot to fulfill her vow, and so a short time after all the Ranis in the seraglio began to nod their heads (*kelna* — "playing" or possession), as if under the influence of a spirit, and continued doing so day and night. The Raja summoned all the sadhus and chelas. One of the latter said that the cause of the Ranis being possessed by spirits was that a vow to Baba Balak Rupi had not been fulfilled. The Raja replied that if all the Ranis recovered, he would take all his family to the temple and present and promised offering. The chela then prepared a thread in the name of the Baba and when this was put round the neck of the persons possessed they recovered.

This myth may be conveniently divided into three parts: (1) the incident of Jogu and the Gosain, (2) the finding of the Balak Nath image, and (3) the Rani incident. In each is revealed the strongly sectarian Gosain position through the structural movement from non-discipleship to discipleship. The power contained in the Gosain tradition of celibate discipleship is affirmed as the source of true fertility. The failure to recognize this power (disobedience) is always disastrous.

(1) Jogu, a name which already indicates a "small yogi" by the addition of the suffix "u", meets a Gosain in the jungle who asks him to become his disciple. Jogu accepts and promises obedience. But he is unable to handle the power; he is uninitiated, and becomes possessed — which leads to his disobedience, and the resultant madness. Or, Gosain-obedience : Gosain-disobedience : : sanity : insanity The resolution (necessarily partial) comes through initiation, joining the order. For Jogu is given a cotton thread (the symbol of initiation of the Nath sect, i. e. the *janeo*, the sacred thread of the *upanayana* ceremony) by another Gosain who recognizes the other Gosain as the saint.

(2) The second part re-presents in symbolic form, the message of the myth, and thus the central Gosain position. That is, by presenting the whole scenario of Gosain life from birth to initiation through symbols, it reveals its stake in celibate fertility and discipleship. The following is the symbolic code I have used.

Earth = the Mother, Source (opened by Gosain)
hole = womb, vagina (also the rosebush ?)
pindi (stone) = image of Balak, the boy-saint
blood = birth (cf. *samskaras*)
milk = mother's milk (cf. *samskaras*)
saffron = solid food
incense flame = worship, *upanayana* ceremony
water = purity, second birth as *Brahmacaria*

The incident following the bath which I have interpreted as the second birth (initiation) in which the *pindi* moves of its own accord into a temple tank and emits milk would appear to indicate that the process is complete — Balak has now reached the state of perfection (*siddha*, power) characterized by the ability to control milk, as was found in Baba Nath. The fact that the process stops after the *upanayana* (initiation) instead of proceeding to the *ghristi asrama* (householder's stage) reveals the Gosain position. They are the eternal *Brahmacharia*, the celibate boys who never pass through the stage of the householder, and who are, in fact, strongly opposed to this state. This explains the saint's name, for he is the saint who is in the shape of a boy, and choses for his disciple the boy of twelve.

However, though never explicitly stated, the opposing category to *Brahmacharia* — the *ghristi* (householder) is very much present within the structure of the myth. In fact, it is precisely this opposition which is the animating force of the myth. We have so far seen the myth as a statement of the Gosain position. But this statement is only one side of the opposition in Hindu religion and society which, for the Gosains, necessitates the myth; without the unstated implication of the other side it loses its meaning. However, the *ghristi* side of the opposition represents the source of natural fertility — sons for men, and husbands for women. The Gosains must show that side of the opposition can be turned into their side and, paradoxically, that they can provide what anti-Gosains provide.

(3) Thus included in the myth is the story of how the King, Raja Abhi Chand, a Rajput who cannot become a Gosain and who requires a son, is able to receive one from the Temple of Baba Balak Nath. Furthermore, it even includes the getting of a husband for a Rajput girl (also unqualified for Gosain membership). Going to wash the cow represents going to Balak Nath; hesitancy, the opposing doubt. However, once the husband (a mighty raja) is received, obedience is required for this level of discipleship. Thus disobedience again results in possession (madness, the breaking up of the social order); and is once again cured by the cotton thread (discipleship), as well as the gift of the copper bull (a symbol of Siva).

C. INTER—MYTH RELATIONS : THE WIDER CONTEXT

A number of common features may be discerned in the two mythical Nath figures :

1) Both are called "*balak*" and "*nath*"; that is, both are "boy-saints", *brahmacaria's* defined by their purity and celibacy.
2) Both are associated with cows and milk as well as the ability to "control" milk.
3) Both are associated with the earth. Balak Rupi is found in the earth, he is encountered while going to plow; while Deot Sidh descends into the earth.
4) Both demonstrate their power over fertility. Deot Sidh rejeuvenates the wheat field; Balak Rupi gives sons and husbands. This characteristic is also evident in the worship accorded them, for both are offered first fruits of harvests and beseached for sons in the Kangra area.

Thus it is clear that both represent "celibate fertility" associated with the earth and milk.

On the other hand, two areas of conflict may be noted;

1) Deot Sidh (or Baba Balak Nath) is consistently opposed to the discipleship which is so strongly affirmed in the Balak Rupi myth. No matter whether the sectarian group is the *kanphata yogis* or the Gosains, the relationship with Deot Sidh is always one of opposition.
2) While Deot Sidh is considered by some as Gugga's brother as well as Balak Nath's brother (indicative of a positive relation), the Balak Rupi myth clearly shows a conflict with Gugga such that the Gugga temple is finally destroyed and replaced by Balak Nath temple. Thus while Balak Nath stands in a positive relation to Gugga, Balak Rupi appears in a negative relation towards that figure.

The fundamental characteristic of these two inter-Nath conflicts is that they are of a highly sectarian nature. That is, while Balak Rupi is very much pro-discipleship in the celibate Gosain order (in some ways definitely a Gorakhnath order), Deot Sidh is very much against it. And while there appears to be competition and hostility between Balak Rupi and Gugga, Deot Sidh remains "brother" to both. This suggests that the myths of Deot Sidh and Balak Rupi must to some degree be understood as part of particular sectarian religious traditions as contrasted with the Gugga myth which represents the *santana* or "traditional" religion. Furthermore, Deot Sidh would appear to serve some sort of mediating function, although he unmistakably remains a Nath. This remains a superficial formulation, though, which may be refined both to clarify the inter-relationships, the religious milieu and, most importantly, a deeper understanding of structural tenets.

GORAKHNATH AND HATHA YOGA SYMBOLISM

In the Gugga myth, the emphasis placed on paternal ambiguity was found to be of major significance, for in effect, Gugga had been born without a father, and without intercourse having taken place. The myths of Gorakhnath's origin reveal an interesting inverse parallel. Gorakhnath, likewise born without intercourse having taken place, lacks a mother, but has Siva for a father :

> Siva after he had recited the Yoga doctrine to Parvati, standing on the sea shore, while Matsyendra (in the form of a fish) was listening, gave something to a woman to eat, with a promise that she would obtain a son. The woman did not eat the substance (elsewhere described as ashes), but cast it upon a dung-hill. Twelve years later, Matsyendra passed by the same spot and asked to see the child. He heard what the woman had done and asked her to search in the dung heap. She there discoverd a boy of twelve years. That boy was named Gorakhnath. (Briggs: (1938, 182)

Here, as in two other versions, the mother-substitute is a dung-hill, while one other version records a cow as the receptacle of Siva's "gift". However, the dung-hill is not a "mother", but rather, I think, a relatively pure incubator. Thus Gorakhnath is motherless, while Gugga is fatherless.

However, this motherless/fatherless opposition is apparent only on the first "level" of analysis. Proceeding according to different Hindu physiological pre-suppositions, in which the embryo is said to be "deposited" in the womb, another opposition emerges. In this understanding Bachal the mother can also be conceived of as an "incubator"; moreover, as an incubator of less purity than the dung-heap or the cow. Likewise, taking the actual "physiological" facts of Gugga's conception outside of their mythological context, it can be seen that his paternity is of the same nature as Gorakhnath's, that is, derived from an incense plant or some ashes (which in one version are said to come from Brahman's brow). Ashes (and incense) are a white residue of spiritual heat (in either sense of the Vedic fire or the *tapas*-heat generated by spiritual austerity). Thus birth occurs through *tapas*-ashes being deposited in "incubator mothers" (the symbolic logic will become clearer below). That is, birth is achieved through spiritual celibacy, the source of austerity *tapas*; and this, then, is the position represented by the Naths, and in some senses Gugga.

But as we have noted, the Gugga,myth reveals other dimensions of the birth problem in which the conflict includes the claims of human fathers. This is the other side of the opposition—male-female intercourse birth. And inasmuch as this is seen as the "empirical" mode of birth, the celibate fertility position is doubted (i.e. by Sabir Dei, Jewar's sister). The Gugga myth presents both sides of the opposition and is thus the *sanatana* (traditional) position; while the Naths represent a onesided sectarian answer to the *same* opposition.

However, there is good reason in Hindu religious culture for the Nath's position to hold an enduring value which makes the opposition real. As was noted in the ritual analysis, semen is the source of strength; its loss results in both weakness and pollution, disease and death.

Thus the *Hatha Yoga* system attributed (therefore associated) to Gorakhnath is in essence a means of retaining the fall of semen through perfecting inner control, and thus achieving a means for release from *samsara* (*moksa*). Its basis is a system through which man is visualized as a reflection of the cosmos on a symbolic–physiological plane, when the cosmos is viewed as a series of oppositions. These oppositions may be divided into two columns, although like the oppositions found in structural analysis, it is the relation between them which is constant, rather than the symbolic content.

Siva	Shakti
moon	sun
pale-white *bindu*	blood-red *bindu*

semen	menstrual fluid
soma (nectar)	*agni* (fire)
food (*upabhogya*)	consumer (*bhokta*)
amrta (immortal)	*kalagni* (destruction)
changeless	changing
bull (cow)	(tigress) (serpent)
(milk)	(blood)
(fluidity)	(dryness)

According to the most usual schema, the left hand column (considered as a pole) is situated in the cerebrum (just below the *sahasrara cakra*) facing downwards; while the right hand column is below the navel (in the *muladhara cakra*) facing up. Similarly they may be considered horizontally, the left column associated with the *ida* channel (*nadi*) running from the left testicle to the left nostril, and the right column with the *pingla nadi*, running from the right testicle to the right nostril. The object of the yogic exercises is to bring the columns (on the basis of individual oppositions) together; "from the mingling of these two, verily, one obtains the highest state" (*Goraksa Sataka*, 74). This must occur both horizontally (uniting the two *nadis* or channels into the third, the *susumna*) and vertically (by drawing up the symbols represented in the right column through the *susumna* and the six *cakras*, or centers, until they unite and finally provide release in the highest *cakra*, the top of the head).

Semen or *bindu* (on the philosophical level, nectar) thus originates near the top of the body to the left of the space between the eyebrows. As it has a tendency to fall down, various techniques are utilized to stop its downward (and eventually outward) passage, such as the *khecari-mudra*, the bending of the tongue back into the throat. This is the source of the notion that intercourse may be performed as long as the semen is retained — a widely spread tantric idea.

> By whom the hollow in the top of the throat is sealed by khecari, his bindu, even (though he be) embraced by a woman, does not fall.
> While the bindu remains in the body, there is no fear of death. As long as the khecari-mudra is continued, so long the bindu does not go down. (Goraksa Sataka, 69-70)

This understanding, forming the base of the Nath cults, and prevalent throughout Hinduism, is extraordinarily revealing. For, having accepted this view, the problem becomes, how is the world maintained?, how are sons begotten ?, how does this fit in with how the natural world is seen to work, with the values of family and society, etc.? In brief, how is there fertility ?

But these are precisely the questions we have found in the myths, in the contradiction between celibate fertility and human fertility. However, the nature of the contradiction is now clearer:

celibate fertility : intercourse fertility
: : retention of semen : loss of semen
: : strength : weakness
: : ascetic religious order : householder's dharma

In essence, the contradiction lies in the fact that while spiritual and physical strength may only be had through celibacy, religious and social perpetuation is maintained only through intercourse and the example of nature. For the left hand column (changelessness, purity, etc.) requires the right hand column (change, the pollution that comes from death and rebirth, etc.). Both are demanded, yet neither is reconcileable with the other.

This has been very clearly demonstrated by O'Flaherty in her work with asceticism and sexuality in Siva myths.

> Both Siva and Parvati transgress the normal social order to unite the superficially opposed elements of *tapas* and *kama* (sexuality) that are reconciled in the religious sphere and that, by implication, ought to be combined in ordinary life as well. The opposition on the mortal level is between the two goals: it is best to be a holy man, to give up all sensual pleasures, and it is best to beget sons, to fulfill one's duties to society. This is of course a problem known to other cultures as well, but in Hinduism it is exaggerated, because nowhere on earth are passionless sages more venerated and nowhere are the ties of family and progeny, strengthened by caste structures and the importance of rituals for the dead, more compelling. Man himself must be both procreative and ascetic; so god must be the most ascetic of ascetics, the most erotic of lovers. He resolves the paradox in his own character by embodying the philosophy found throughout Hinduism: that chastity and sexuality are not opposed but symbiotic, that the chaste man is procreative by virtue of his chastity, and that the man who lives happily with his wife is performing a sacrament in his very life — if he but realizes it. (O'Flaherty : 1969, 35)

However, O'Flaherty understands that the resolution by Siva does not remove the contradiction:

> The conflict is resolved not into a static solution but rather into the constant motion of a pendulum, whose animating force is the eternal paradox of the myths. (O'Flaherty: 1969, 41)

MILK AND BLOOD : THE DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE

The fundamental opposition of asceticism/sexuality which we have (with O'Flaherty) found to underlie the myths of Gugga and the Naths, as well as the *samskara* rituals, in the form *sanyasi/ghristi*, has in one sense merely been the most condensed (or revealing) formulation of an oppositional relation re-presented in a number of forms. To a certain extent, these different formulations may be considered homologies of each other set in different contexts and planes of existence. Thus the opposition of asceticism and sexuality is expressed in *hatha yoga* on different levels as moon/sun, milk/blood, changeless/changing, etc. — in which the symbolic contents of each term set in relation to each other revealed new dimensions of the fundamental structure.

However, it was the *relation* in each particular *context* which remained constant; the terms themselves do not and cannot have that constancy, for given another context, another angle on the problems, and the terms must shift their emphasis from one aspect of meaning to another in order to accommodate and express that particular manifestation. For example, *bindu* the essential fluid, includes both semen and menstrual blood, and can on one level be opposed as a whole against dryness, whereas on another level, it must be divided by color (pale-white/blood-red) or by gender (male/female), or by location (above/below). Thus for certain purposes, other relations may be more suitable for expressing the complex of relations connected with the semen aspect of *bindu* and its control — which indeed appears to be the case with the milk/blood opposition, where the control of semen is expressed by the control of milk. This ability to express something in terms of something else, or as Bartsch has said, "the expression of unobservable realities in terms of observable phenomena" (Leach: 1967, 1) is, in fact, one of the primary characteristics (and abilities) of myths.

Application of these principles to the wide range of oppositions discerned in the myths presented in this chapter, then, immediately suggests an analytic caution. Homologies of a one-to-one correspondence sort can be legitimately found only in a single context i.e. a single myth. It is not possible without violence to the material to align all oppositions together or to reduce them to one. However, these myths exist not only within a single religious cultural system, but within the same sub-cultural unit of Kangra, and furthermore, as has been noted, refer in some senses to each other. Thus the task as attempted has been the examination of the structure and formulation of each myth in order to reveal how it has approached and re-presented certain fundamental contradictions in Hindu thought and society vis-a-vis the others. In that two basic points of view, the Nath-sectarian and the *sanatana*-traditional were found to be represented, the inter-mythical analysis, while potentially rewarding, must remain more a product of analyzer's own understanding, than a more coherent mythical tradition such as the Saivite one.

With these qualifications, a brief overview of the threee myths is presented below.

Gorakhnath and Balak Rupi Nath represent patrilineal descent in its logical, ideal extreme — descent without a mother. Gorakhnath is born without a mother, Siva is his father both literally and in the sense of fatherhood as the object of complete obedience and respect, i.e. the Guru. In fact, it is Matsyendra Nath who finds him and makes him his disciple (takes over the father-role), and it is precisely through the gurus that the lineage is traced. Likewise Balak Nath, though consenting to grant husbands to Rajputs who need them, is primarily concerned with discipleship in the celibate male line.

In contrast, Gugga, although fully exhibiting all the tensions and ambiguities involved in such a position in a patrilineal society, represents descent from the maternal side. He is born from his mother after doubt has been cast on his proper paternity (King Jewar) and a great deal of potential disgrace associated with possible descent from males on the maternal side. The extreme ideal opposition to Gorakhnath's patrilineal descent *is* entirely maternal descent and that is clearly present in the myth in Gugga's expression of disgrace at birth at his maternal house when this is in fact the accepted custom in reality. But such a possibility in the face of very strong incest taboos could not and cannot be openly voiced or even consciously admitted, and must be inversely stated.* Gorakhnath serves as the resolution. The statement of a wholly maternal source (in the kinship sense of mother-maternal uncle intercourse which *nana* as grandfather of both means) is thus stated in terms of its opposite — the wholly paternal (without the intercourse) derivation represented by Gorakhnath. Both meanings are unmistakeably present, as indicated earlier in the double physiological explanation discovered as possible. Were the extreme of mother incest not thus represented, then much of the Gugga myth would have to be considered meaningless.

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* Levi-Strauss writes,
"The myth is certainly related to given (empirical) facts, but as a *re-presentation* of them. The relationship is of a dialectic kind, and the institutions described in the myths can be the very opposite of the real institutions. This will in fact always be the case when the myth is trying to express a negative truth." (in Leach: 1967, 29)

This reformulation of the situation yields the following opposition:
celibate-paternity/intercourse-maternity

(or) celibacy : intercourse : : paternity : maternity (in the senses noted above) or, more rarely celibacy : maternity : : intercourse: maternity. If we may form an inter-mythic homology on the symbolic plane, it could be stated as Balak Rupi : Gugga : : milk : blood. For celibate-paternity is symbolized by the control of milk (purified semen) in the same way as intercourse-maternity necessitates the flow of blood: menstrual blood, birth blood, and ultimately, even brotherly blood— for the twins Arjan and Surjan and the inevitable result of over-fertility through the too close blood ties of incest, the extreme fertility, must be killed.

Given this parallel quaternal opposition (+A) + (+B) (—A) + (—B), there are only two possible resolutions:

1) celibate-maternity "(+A) + (—B)"
2) paternal-intercourse "(+B) + (—A)"

The first is represented by Deot Sidh (Baba Balak Nath); the latter is society's own resolution.

Deot Sidh's attempted resolution of the contradiction through celibate-maternity, is seen in his position as cow-herd to the devote celibate Brahman lady (in one version described as doing years of austerities, *tapas*). This must necessarily be a non-paternal, non-disciple relationship, which it is. He looks after her cows, *her milk* (in this sense, maternal milk) — and thus he also is a *balak*, a boy. However, this resolution is not satisfactory (as no resolution can be), particularly because it contradicts too much in the Hindu tradition that cannot place a female mother in a male ascetic's place. It does not work, and the Brahmani's cows destroy (eat up) the wheat fields. Deot Sidh must then give her back her milk and her wheat (her attempts at celibate fertility) and reassert the balance by demonstrating his own. However, Deot Sidh, like Siva, still remains a mediating figure — although asserting male celibate fertility, he refuses discipleship and extreme patrilinity. There is no attempt to show male descent; Deot Sidh remains the single ascetic who picks the celibacy path to spiritual power (*siddha*) but does not deny normal workings of society. He demonstrates an option, and it is left to the Devi (goddess) in some of her manifestations to develop celibate-maternity.

Society's answer is paternal-intercourse, the mediating resolution. However, as forcefully demonstrated by the very myths and rituals we have been examining, it is not a final static resolution. Rather, it is a balance between the eternally present and eternally alive poles of the contradictions, an uneasy balance maintained through the expression and resolution of the conflict ritually through the *samskaras*, and mythically through figures like Balak Nath, Balak Rupi, and Gugga.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As stated in the first chapter, the aim of this study has been two-fold. On the one hand, there has been the effort to record new and more complete data on the religious life of the Kangra peoples, especially in the village of Sunhet. Drawing on this and supplementary material from the surrounding areas, the other and perhaps more important concern has been to discern and understand structural aspects of Hindu ritual and myth, both as an end in itself and as a means of clarifying some of the kinds of changes rural Hinduism is undergoing.

As an ethnographic monograph, the study has necessarily been incomplete and selective — in part because it has confined itself mainly to religious life and in part because all presentations of ethnographic data must suffer the limitations of the researcher, the amount of time spent in researching, and the incomplete and selective nature of all the data. Thus, while I am fairly satisfied with data recorded for the *samskaras* (life -cycle rituals), there is need for more exhaustive research in several areas such as the shamans, the purohits, the sadhus, and the attitudes of different individuals and groups of people. Additionally, I would have liked to investigate more thoroughly the semi-sectarian cults surrounding dieties unique to Kangra such as *Javala Mukhi Devi* and *Baba Deot Sidh*. However, I hope that what has been presented will be of some value to the body of information accumulated on village Hinduism as well as presenting the data and background picture for my analysis.

A. STRUCTURE

The aim of the structural analysis has been to come to a better understanding of Hinduism as revealed by Sunhet village of Kangra district. For this purpose, it has been assumed that there is a religious system which may be conceived as a "language" of inter-related symbols, rituals, actions, etc. Thus, the analysis proceeded by attempting to understand this language through examination of the contexts and referents of the ritual actions and symbols found in the *samskaras*: and by revealing some of the oppositional relations which are the structural basis of this language. That is, the "language" was understood in structural terms as expressing various relations of an oppositional sort which through constant recurrance in different forms appear fundamental to Hinduism.

The structural relations which emerged from this analysis were in the form of sets of oppositions which in differing contexts and on different levels can be seen as "transformational homologies" of each other. This is not to say that all the structural relations are reducible to one opposition on one level. Rather, there are sets of oppositions on different levels which within their *particular contextual configurations* are found to express the same contrasting and conflicting relation as sets of oppositions in other contexts. This *relation* connects terms which tend to cluster around two opposing poles (which may be expressed as the basic opposition)— however, it is the relation between the poles which is constant and not its constituitive terms which may in particular contexts be reversed or contrasted differently. The ubiquity of the relation which connects the sets of oppositions within the Hindu cultural context is due precisely to this multi-leveled nature of culture. For following Levi-Strauss and Leach (1970), these sets of oppositions are understood as meaningful because they are expressions on different levels of the fundamental conflicts and contradictions experienced by members of that culture.

Thus, to reiterate the findings of the previous two chapters, I would characterize the opposing poles, or the basic opposition expressed in its most generalized form, as being between the *sanyasi* and the *ghristi*, or the "saint" and the "householder". In this, I am in basic agreement with Dumont:

> It is here, around the dialogue of the sanyasi and the man of the world, that religio-philosophical speculation revolves, concealing a contradiction, a dichotomy. (Dumont: 1957, 17)

and O'Flaherty :

> The myths make the Hindu aware of the struggle and of its futility; they show him that his society demands of him two roles which he cannot possibly satisfy fully — that he become a householder and beget sons, and that he renounce life and seek union with God. (O'Flaherty: 1969, 302)

However, whereas Dumont is here concerned with "religio-philosophical speculation" and O'Flaherty with Saivite mythology, my analysis has led to this opposition as part of a wider series of relations discovered within the *samskara* rituals and several relatively local myths in Kangra.

Thus homologies of this opposition have been found in rituals and myths where to a certain extent

> myth regarded as a statement in words 'says' the same thing as ritual regarded as a statement in action. (Leach: 1954, 14)

These "statements" were understood as relations found in both myth and ritual, in forms such as the following:

uncut hair : cut hair : :
retention of semen : loss of semen : :
outside society : inside society : :
purity : pollution

Furthermore, oppositions of a similar sort were found that reflect this conflict within the social order; that is, oppositions that are representations of the tensions between agnates and affines and deal with the problems of paternity. For example, giver/receiver; fasting/eating; milk/blood, etc.

The analysis of the *Gugga*, *Deot Sidh,* and *Balak Rupi* myths, however, not only enabled us to further clarify these structural aspects, but to relate in some fashion the two oppositions *sanyasi/ghristi* and *agnates/affines* by proceeding with a highly analytic synthesis. The result was the double opposition

celibate-paternity/intercourse-maternity

which may also be formulated in its various other combinations.

What does all this mean ? In different terms it means that I have found there to be a fundamental contradiction in Hindu culture and social structure centered around the conflicting poles of the celibate saint (*sanyasi*) and pure patrilineality versus intercourse-fertility (*ghristi*) and hypothetical matrilineality. The contradiction lies in the fact that celibate sainthood is the religious ideal, while polluting sexual and societal relations are necessary for fertility (human and agricultural). The contradiction is ultimately unresolvable; the myths, rituals, and religious ideals each attempt resolutions in their own sphere of expression. Thus, as we have seen, the *asramas* (life-stages) attempt a resolution over time, alternating the different modes of living; while the *samskaras* (life cycle rituals) deal with more concrete aspects of the contradiction; and the myths each seek their own separate, yet interrelated resolutions — resolutions which are not static, but dynamic balances between the two poles.*

It must be stressed, though, that there is no single formulation of the problem which yields a single resolution or expression. Each individual and group formulates the problem in particular situations in related yet significantly different terms. Thus the householder is more concerned with the problems of social structure (agnates/affines, etc.), while the saint ideally is more concerned with how fertility can spring from celibacy. These refocusings of the central contradictions naturally lead to different kinds of resolutions — as was clearly demonstrated by the *Gugga* myth of the *sanatanas* (traditionalists) and the *Balak Rupi* myth of the *Gosains* and *naths* (sectarians). In each myth it is the relation between the terms which is constant, not the specific content. However sectarian the myth, though, each formulation is seen as true (a valid possibility) by other than the followers alone; thus *Balak Rupi* of the Gosains is also worshipped by the traditional Hindus.

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* Psychologically speaking, one might view these myths and rituals as collective attempts to deal with anxiety resultant from the inherent conflicts and tensions in a particular society and culture.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

In reference to the discussion of Hinduism's theoretical framework, and the whole problem of Great and Little Traditions discussed in Chapter Two, it now becomes possible to draw out some of the implications of my structural analysis for understanding Hindu philosophical thought.

In one sense, the *sanyasi/ghristi* (saint/householder) opposition may be seen as related to the problem, born from one/born from two; and the philosophical problem of the one and the many. The "myth-logic" behind this is as follows:

celibate-paternity : intercourse-maternity : :
earth origin : human origin : :
origin from one : origin from two : : for example —
Gorakhnath (the saint) : Jewar (Gugga's father) for any other "normal" *ghristi.*

Thus the earth as the unitary origin of Gorakhnath is opposed to society (males plus females) as the dual origin of human *ghristis.* This further corresponds (as will become clearer below) both mythically and ritually to the opposition burial/cremation. *Sanyasis* are buried (return to their source) while *ghristis* are cremated.

Gugga is a mediating figure — for he combines half of each opposition. Gugga's origin is through celibate-maternity (whithout intercourse) that is half earth origin (the seeds) and half human origin (the female) and is thus simultaneously origin from one (woman) and origin from two (seed plus woman). As such, Gugga stands exactly halfway between the celibate purity of Gorakhnath and the intercourse pollution of *ghristis.* Thus when faced with the option of burial or cremation, Gugga is seen as acceptable to neither (for he is once removed from the earth by female birth and the householder's life), and must become either a *sanyasi* or a Muslim to be united with the earth.

But what are the additional characteristics of the *sanyasi* versus the *ghristi* which allow the relation between them to be expressed in terms of burial/cremation and born of one/born of two ?

In the philosophical traditions, the rationale for the difference lying between *sanyasi*-burial and *ghristi*-cremation is expressed in terms of the *sanyasi's* special relation to *samsara* (the cycle of rebirth). The *ghristi,* defined and controlled by the inexorable workings of *karma* and continually shifting between various states of pollution, is caught in *samsara.* Cremation thus serves to separate him from his polluting body, and provide him ritual transition to the world of the *pitra* (ancestors) from whence he will again descend to human rebirth. In contrast, the *sanyasi* has, or upon death, should, achieve *moksa* –– complete freedom from *karma,* puritypollution, and the *samsara* cycle of rebirth. Thus, we have the following set of correspondences:

sanyasi : ghristis : : burial : cremation : : *moksa* : *samsara*

In one sense, *moksa* (release) represents a single death, while *samsara* represents repeated cyclical death. However, the single "death" of *moksa* is philosophically conceived of as release into eternal life; while *samsara* death correspondingly implies continual rebirth, yielding:

moksa : *samsara* : :
single "death" : many deaths : :
eternal "life" : death and rebirth

This relation may be clarified by examining it along both a synchronic and diachronic axis :

Synchronically

Diachronically	death=LIFE (*moksa*)	death (alternates with)
		life (samsara)
	eternal time	cyclical time

This paradox between the final death of *moksa* (*sanyasi*-burial) being equal to eternal salvation and the *ghristi's* (cremation) death that leads to the "eternal round of deaths and rebirths" which is the bondage of *samsara* is thus an homology to the celibate-paternity/intercourse-maternity opposition previously discussed. For the contradiction still remains that the burial that is from one point of view of the natural order (earth origin) as opposed to cremation which is cultural (human societal origin), is from another point of view the inversion; that is, the cyclical death-rebirth of *samsara* (cremation) is the way of nature (plants, copulation, etc.), while the single death of burial is non-natural and must be culturally translated into eternal life. What is cultural is also natural what is natural is also cultural — and both are ultimately and irresolvably valid.

The distinctive characteristic of the *moksa-burial-sanyasi* meaning cluster is its unitary, non-dualistic nature, while its contrary, *samsara*— cyclical time, etc. is manifold. The *sanyasi* is buried because he remains or becomes undifferentiated from Brahman [his atma (self) is not separated from the *paramatma* (Great Self)] — he is not, like the *ghristi*, separated from his Source by caste-kin, purity-pollution, or good-bad *karma*. So it is the *ghristi* who must be cremated, whose soul requires the mediation of fire to separate it from his body, and various rituals of a societal nature. Thus the opposition may also be conceived of as, *sanyasi* : *ghristi* : : undifferentiated : differentiated.

However, the most extreme poles of undifferentiated/differentiated are not the saint and the householder, but the saint who after death (*moksa*) is reunited with Brahman and the human male or female who cannot complete cremation and consequently becomes a *bhut* (ghost). Thus :

undifferentiated : differentiated : :
Brahman : *bhut*

The *bhut* is in a sense over-differentiated, over-separated from the pure Source through untimely death which is over-laden with pollution. The saint, being pure passes easily into Brahman leaving his body to the earth, while the *bhut* is so contaminated, so defined by his separateness and impurity that he remains forever in limbo. But the *bhut* is in some ways similar to the saint — for like the saint he is removed from *samsara*, the cycle of rebirths :

sanyasi : *samsara* : :
bhut : *samsara*.

In this schema, it is *samsara* and the *ghristi* which function as mediators, as compromise between over-differentiation and non-differentiation. That is:

bhuts and *Brahman* : *ghristis* : :
over-differentiation and non-differentiation : partial differentiation (*samsara*).

Non-differentiation (the Eternal One) and over-differentiation (the eternally many, *bhuts*) are both extremes — the former highly desirable, the latter highly undesirable. *Samsara*, and the semi-differentiated souls who are involved in it are the realistic middle ground constantly in danger of becoming over-differentiated, and to some extent, constantly struggling to become less differentiated. Thus, in disagreement with Dumont (1960: 46, 47), I would understand the renouncer (the *sanyasi*) as the least defined, and the *ghristi* as the individual defined by a variety of differentiating forces (which in their extreme form create *bhuts*). Salvation is the transcendence of *samsara*, the renunciation of the defining and individuating characteristics such as purity-pollution, etc.

Undifferentiated/over-differentiated, then, can be seen as the extremes of a continuum which is indicative of removal from the round of *samsara* and the *samskaras* and corresponding to the poles of purity and pollution. From this perspective, the pantheon can be visualized as falling along various points in the continuum whose extreme limits have already been defined as Undifferentiated Brahman and (highly differentiated) *bhuts*. The cycle of *samsara* falls in between the extremes and includes the *pitrs* (ancestors) who are still controlled by karma. It is only the *sanyasis* (saints) and *bhuts* (ghosts) who are separated from the cycle: the former by reaching an undifferentiated pure state, while the latter has the misfortune of dying at a time of over-differentiated impurity.*

The advantage of seeing the whole pantheon as such a continuum is to show how the many resolutions of the oppositions expressed by each god involve different transformations of the structural fundamentals, and make up, despite my analysis, a holistic cosmos. Even as *Balak Rupi* and *Deot Sidh* and *Gugga* were seen to represent within the context of myth different homologous structures, much of the rest of the pantheon can be seen as dealing with the same contradiction (among others) whithin its own formulation.

In Hindu thought men have the option of "directing themselves" towards one (or more) particular formulation of the problem of salvation. The normal route is the round of *samsara* , alternating between *pitrs* and men through the transitional rites of the *samskaras* and the production of progeny (i.e. the fulfillment of *dharma* or "duty"). On the extremes, negligence of dharmic duties can result in becoming a *bhut* (out of *samsara* through over-differentiation), while various "disciplines of salvation" can result in *moksa* (release from *samsara* through non-differen-

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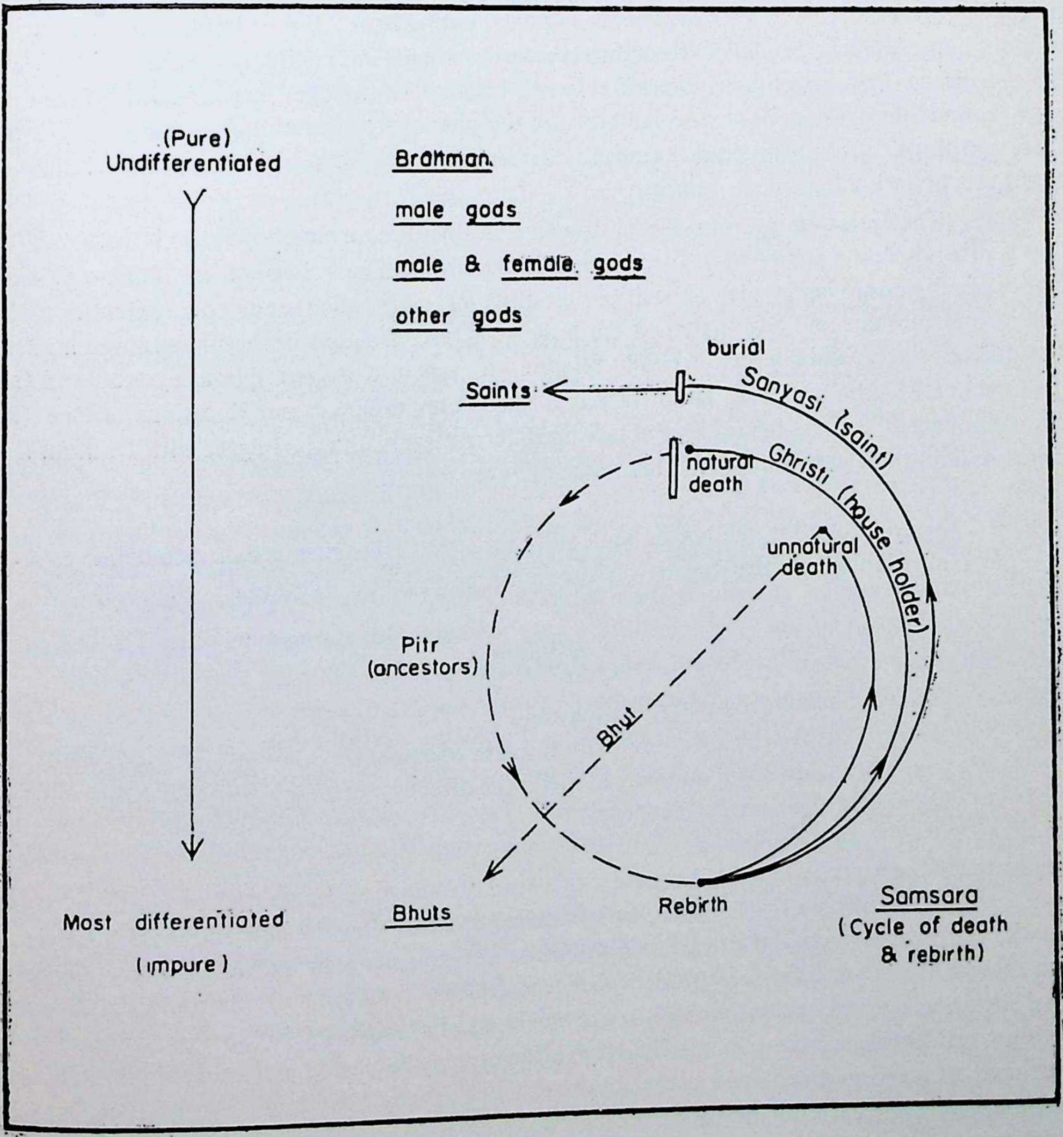
* Hindu thought is not completely clear on the status of *bhuts*, but it is doubtful whether *bhuts* are eternally condemned to their marginal impure existence outside of *samsara*, but rather that their rebirth is just greatly delayed.


(Pure)
Undifferentiated
Brahman
male gods
male & female gods
other gods
burial
Saints
Sanyasi (saint)
natural death
Ghristi (house holder)
unnatural death
Pitr (ancestors)
Bhut
Bhuts
Rebirth
Most differentiated
(impure)
Samsara
(Cycle of death & rebirth)

tiation). However, undifferentiated *Brahman* and the yogic disciplines required for their attainment are in one sense as extreme and irrconcilable as their opposite (becoming a *bhut*). Most salvation disciplines (sects, schools of thought, religious leaders, etc.) can thus be understood as attempting a viable mediation between the extremes of pure undifferentiotion and impure over-differentiation much in the way that *Gugga* may be seen as a mediating figure. For example, then, one salvation discipline involves the devoted worship (*bhakti*) of a male *deva* (slightly differentiated), while the *Bhagavat Gita* in recommending three paths (*jnana* "knowledge" *yoga*, *bhakti* "devotion" *yoga*, *karma* "deeds" *yoga*) lays special stress on the possibility of attaining *moksa* through the correct attitude in following one's karmically determined own *dharma* (*svadharma*) within the confines of householdership and *samsara*.

The crucial point from the perspective of this study is that no matter how the resolution is attempted, no matter what formulation of the problem is stressed, each of these possible modes of religious living involve oppositions on different levels which are to some extent homologies of one another, and are related to the basic structures isolated in the preceeding chapters. The different levels and aspects of Hindu religion are part of a *single* religious system, and that the Great and Little Traditions are in very real senses only different manifestations of One Tradition and merely express the same structure on different levels. In this, I agree with Dumont that there are important pan–Indian features which are not stressed

> or even found in the books, and, still more, that Hinduism is easier to define as a set of relations or structurees, on the non-literate level. (Dumont: 1959, 42)

B. CHANGE

Srinivas has defined sanskritization as —

> the process by which a "low" Hindu caste or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste. (Srinivas: 1966, 6)

I indicated in the first chapter that I consider this kind of change as "semantic" rather than "structural"; that is, "replacive" rather than "reformative". In this view the new and more 'pestigious' practices and values acquired can be seen as "structural transformations" of the old— a conclusion inherent in the understanding of the Great and Little Traditions as one tradition. As such, sanskritization may be understood as a particular kind of change which at present appears to be having considerable impact within India. It nevertheless may be classed with other kinds of changes that have occurred in a replacive rather than reformative way. Replacive change, then, may be contrasted with structurally re-formative change such as westernization and secularization in which basic structures are broken down and made over in new modes. It is my contention that change in the religious sphere *tends* to be replacive.

Such change is able to adapt to new circumstances with the least amount of resistance. Reformative change in attempting to bring about new structures necessarily conflicts with the old system and stronger and more persistent forces are required for acceptance.

REPLACIVE PROCESSES OF CHANGE IN KANGRA

The process of sanskritization is evident in Sunhet village and Kangra as a whole among the lower castes. The dominant caste which serves as their model is, of course, the Rajputs whose religious practices have been presented in this study. Among the more prestigious customs adopted by the lower castes have been the *kanya dan* ("daughter-gift") form of marriage (at some time in the indeterminable past replaced the bride price) More recently, bands and palanquins are used at marriages that once were permitted only to the higher castes. Additionally, some lower caste members have taken to wearing the *janeo* (sacred thread) and including the *upanayana* ceremony amongst the marriage rituals. However, the full extent of this process was beyond the scope of my research, and I am here merely affirming its value as an explanatory concept of a kind of replacive change in the Kangra setting.

Replacive change of the kind which I assume must have occurred throughout the history of the religious practices of every subculture are more difficult to pinpoint. Chapter Three referred to two examples which bear recall.

The first is the adoption of the *kanya dan* form of marriage by the Rajputs themselves, probably in imitation of plains cultures. The exchange structure was maintained, though elevated in status through the substitutionof merit (*pun*) for the bride price as was demonstrated earlier. Further more, the inclusion of many rituals of a distinctly local character suggests that although new elements of Brahmanic ritual may have in some point in the past been adopted, these elements were merely some sanskritic ways of dealing with the same contradictions which are evident in many other Rajput religious expressions.

The second example concerns the elimination of the officiating Brahman in the initial stages of the death ceremonies. This appears, in some respects, to be a reverse of the replacive processes which tends to adopt more prestigious customs. For here, apparently for exconomic reasons, what was once performed through the mediation of a *charj brahman* is now performed by the chief mourner. However, as the analysis showed, the chief mourner due to his special position is still able to effect the mediation between the deceased and both the *bradari* (relations) and the *pitr* (ancestors).

This type of substitution of less prestigious customs necessarily meets resistence from the inertia of traditional methods. Thus, when a very respected Sunhet villager attempted to drastically cut back marriage expenses by eliminating various feasts, etc. (a reform desired by many members of the community) he was afterwards criticized so heavily that he has subsequently reverted to the customary ways.

In the mythological sphere, replacive attitudes of the sort discussed at the end of Chapter Two occur regarding belief in the members of the pantheon. However, we are now in a better position to see how the discarding of *devta* myths for *deva*-leval myths (i.e. *Deot Sidh* for *Siva*), and even the symbolic interpretation of mythological events and figures from a Hindu philosophical viewpoint can be seen as homologies of each other. The same basic structures are expressed on different levels and through different formulations. In reality, villagers rarely abandon all expressions on one level. They tend to give credence to certain statements on all levels, even though they appear contradictory to the observer. Thus it is not unusual to find individuals who express disbelief of one miraculous divine figure on the basis that "they are all superstitions" while still believing others which appear to the Westerner equally improbable. Another example is found in the people who maintain belief in certain stories and events by relegating them either to the immediate or far distant past, before "this degenerate age" (*kal yug*).

THE RADHA SOAMIS: AN ADAPTIVE SECT

About fifteen people of Sunhet village are members of the Radha Soami sect. This sect, which has its headquarters at Beas in the Punjab probably numbers upwards of several hundred thousand adherents throughout the Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. It is one of the major "renaissance sects" which have grown rapidly in India during the last century. In fact, the Sunhet "conversions" ("initiations" would be more accurate) all occurred within the last ten years, and appear to be continuing. During the year of our residence one new member was initiated.

The relationshhip of this sect to *sanatana* or traditional Hinduism, ancient and modern, is very complex and requires for its understanding the whole historical study of all the modern "reformatory" sects. For influences as diverse as the publication of translated Sanskrit texts, Christian criticism and preaching, and the emergence of Westernized science were all crucial to their development. Thus, I will here merely sketch a few of the pertinent relationships, referring the reader to Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements in India* (1910) for almost the only (although outdated) study of the modern sects and a resume of R. D. Griswold's *The Radha Swami Sect* (1960), plus the literature put out by the Radha Soamis themselves. It should be noted that although not mentioned by Farquhar or Griswold, the Beas Radha Swamis appear to be an offshoot of the main Radha Swami sect centered in Agra through a succession of Sikh disciples following upon Jaimal Singh who was a disciple of the original Radha Swami Dayal (1818–1878).

The Radha Soami (to use their spelling) Sect may be simplistically viewed as a transformation of the *hatha yoga* described in Chapter Four. However, instead of having six *chakras* (centers) which may be located physiologically from the rectum to the forehead, they add two more "regions" of six *chakras* each which are physiologically located in close proximity in the head. Their eighteen *chakras* are in a continuum between the poles "material" and "spiritual", while the three regions define the areas of predominance. Thus, the lowest region (which corresponds to the six *hatha yoga chakras*) is the material region; the highest region is pure spirit; and the middle region is spiritual-material (where spirit triumphs over matter). The highest chakra is the realm of *Radha Swami*, the universal, undifferentiated, infinitely radiant, changeless God. Thus the poles of material/spiritual are also seen as changaeable/changeless, most differentiated/undifferentiated, etc.

As in *hatha yoga*, the goal is to ascent the *chakras* to the top where salvation is attained through re-union with God and release from *samsara*. However, the Radha Swamis avoid the necessity of rising through the first six *material chakras,* and state that it is possible to take a short-cut through meditation on the "third eye" (sixth *chakra*) which will enable the disciple to proceed straight to the spiritual regions. He does this by uniting his soul-spirit with the "spirit current" which emmennates from Radha Swami. For Radha Swami, although in itself undifferentiated, divides into two "persons" on lower levels. Radha becomes the spirit current *sabdh*, the word, or sound vibrations, the feminie principle, the moving; while Swami becomes the masculine principle, the attribute-less, the changeless. Radha is to Swami as the sun's rays are to the sun, and as feminine is to masculine. The disciple, thus, practising what is called *surt shabd yoga* is able to experience and follow up the sound current through the *chakras* to its source.

How does this sect then deal with the basic contradiction of celibate-paternity/intercourse-maternity ?

It attempts to do so by projecting a transformation onto the oppositional plane material/spiritual, retaining many of the corelative oppositions exemplified above. For although vegetarianism, abstinence from intoxicants, and moderation in all forms of living are demanded according to the principle outlined below:

> Acts (including spirutual practice) which tend to free the spirit from matter and raise it to its source are good, and those which tend to degrade it are bad. (Griswold: 1919 14)

sexual abstinence and renunciation of the householder's life are not required. In essence, the Radha Swamis attempt to bypass this problem, for by avoiding the bottom physiological *chakras* (which we have understood as dealing with this problem directly), they attempt to avoid physiology itself insofar as this is possible.

Thus, in order to effect a transition — turn the physiological into the spiritual without dealing directly with the contradictions embodied in the physiological, they must introduce an anomolous category, a powerful mediator. This they do in the form of the *satguru* ("true guru"). For ever since the first guru, Radha Soami Dayal, who is seen as identical to Radha Swami God, there has been a succession of *satgurus* who are perceived as being so highly advanced spiritually that they have ascended all the *chakras*. Because they will upon death reunite with Radha Swami itself, they can in the meantime act as intercessors, as the incrranate God. Thus, throughout Radha Swami literature and teaching, there is a constant and crucial stress in the importance of the *satguru* for the avoidance of the first six *chakras* and the "short-cut" to the higher regions.

This explanation of the underlying tensions, while highly abbreviated, finds support in the literature. When the first Radha Swami appointed a *sadhu* (*sanyasi*, saint) for his *sadhu* followers, he found it necessary to separately appoint his wife for the *ghristis*, for he is recorded as saying,

> It is I who have made the tiger and the goat drink from the same pool. It is not possible for anybody else to do it. (*Sar Bachan:* 22)

As additional confirmation, it may be noted that the main Radha Swami disciple in Sunhet stated that while it was possible through the *guru* to attain salvation while still a householder, it was still better to obeserve abstinence.

A further structural transformation involving Western scientific thought may be noted among the Radha Swamis. This is the understanding of the *chakras* in a manner supposedly consonant with Western anatomical science. Each of the first six physiological *chakras* are considered as "nerve-plexes", and the upper two regions are correlated with the gray and white matter of the brain. These notions may be considered replacive because the same structure is filled with new contents without in any way altering the previous set of classifications. In a similar manner, the Radha Swamis by relegating the members of the pantheon to the lower levels, are able to retain the existence of the pantheon without limiting their validity.

RE-FORMATIVE PROCESSES OF CHANGE

In contrast to the kind of adaptive change outlined above, the Radha Swami sect also illustrates some of the effects of Westernization, which are so prevalent throughout India. Thus, in their anti-caste and service-oriented policies, the influence of Christianity and democracy may be seen. In fact, both of these attitudes do have an indigenous history in such break-away religions as Buddhism and Sikhism, but the widespread employment by modern Hindu religious leaders of such attitudes is a modern phenomenon directly traceable to the impact of the West.

Despite both religious and governmental caste reform policies, actual change appears minimal in Kangra. Certain restrictions are removed, but the basic features of endogomy and regulations against inter-dining remain intact. Thus, for example, high caste Radha Swamis will invite low caste initiates into their courtyards for their religious meetings (*sat sanghs*), but they will not invite them into their houses or eat with them despite their lip-service to the ideal of caste equality. This was brought home to me in a discussion of high caste *sat sanghis* (Radha Swami initiates) in which they were joking about what excuses they could use when they went for a meeting at a low caste house where they would be offered food.

Westernization and secularization (Srinivas: 1966, 118) can be either disintegrating forces gradually restricting the number of acceptable religious beliefs (bringing critical discontent with regards to certain religious practices), or it can be violently disruptive (imposing radically different structures of thought and action). In fact, the latter rarely occurs, and if it does, it appears as a result of cummulative disintegration, or as a kind of schizophrenic phenomenon. Thus, the growth of technology can serve to increase the number of pilgrims to Jvala Mukhi Temple by providing easy transportation. The buses themselves become objects of worship at Divali along with other tools of trade. Likewise, a young Sunhet Rajput can become an officer in the Indian Army learning all the appropriate modes of British-Indian-Army behavior, and still retire to his own village — building a slightly more modern house, and driving a scooter — but still performing the correct *samskaras* for his children. This ambivalence, this heterogeneous combination of different kinds of change is, of course, a truer picture of what is going on in Kangra villages today than any explanation which attempts to demonstrate complete continuity or complete disrution. What this analysis has attempted to show is that there arecertain important structural features of Kangra Hinduism and Hinduism as a whole which due to their contradictory and ultimately irresolvable nature tend to persist either through their traditional forms or their modern translations. The disintegrating and reintegrating forces of Westernization and secularization cannot and should not be ignored, for they are ubiquitous and powerful. But it appears to me, that in the light of the structural congruity of religious activity and thought discovered between local, sanskritic, and modern traditions the persistence of certain basic features of the Hindu religion and society is insured for some time to come.

Structural analysis is merely a tool for understanding Hinduism is far too complex, far too multi-faceted, far too human to be defined by the kind of reductionism it permits. The religious life of Sunhet village in Kangra district is composed of the religious lives of each individual in that village and every group of which he is or can be a member. The variation is enormous. However, just as every member of Sunhet has a common language with which he may communicate, a language operating according to certain patterns of regularity, he also has a religious heritage through which he may place himself in the social and cultural order. His religious heritage, like his language, conforms to certain patterns. It is expressed through socio-cultural relations which persist precisely because they are meaningful on many levels of his existence. The purpose of this study has been to extract some of these relations, some of these basic conflicts which serve to structure the universe in which Kangra Rajputs live.

* * *

Appendix I

Statistical features of Sunhet Mauza

Population: over 2,000 (1,700 in 1962)
Caste: 90% Rajput
Area: 1,809 Acres
Cultivated Land: 597 Acres
Uncultivated Land: 1,212 Acres
Number of Houses: 425 (in 1962)
Landholdings of Prominent Rajputs: From 5-25 Acres

Winter Crop (Soni Passal)

328	A.	Corn
91	A.	Mash (lentils)
30	A.	Til (oil)
21	A.	Rice
10	A.	Cotton (Kapas)
9	A.	San (rope)
8	A.	Kamand (cane)
5	A.	Squash
		(remaining devoted to spices)

Summer Crop (Rabi Fassal)

365	A.	Wheat
62	A.	Gandan Channe (Chick peas)
11	A.	Kalas Jau (barley)
9	A.	Sarson (Mustard)
4	A.	Jau (maize)
2	A.	Masser Dal (lentils)
2	A.	Potatoes
		(remaining, spices and vegetables)

APPENDIX II

MANTRAS

The following are two *mantras* (magical formulas) collected from the *chela* (healer) Kushi Ram, together with very rough and incomplete translations. Translations from the original Pahari are made difficult by the admixture of other languages, and the large percentage of proper nouns, repeated words, etc. The first, *Paharia Mantar*, is used to summon the *devta* Pharia. The second, *Ma Bir Kil*, is used in cases of *bhut* (ghost) attack and *jadu* (magic).

PAHARIA MANTAR:

Par samundar sui batali jine kotar so beta jai mata kokie da jaya unha parvat se uncha parvat jahan se nikkkle Baba Kalia Baba Inciliya Baba Paharia Baba Sindu Mata Bakli da jaya Brahma Phuria da phai Kalanbhai da beta nani Kubria da utara chadrua da potra bhaian Paharia da Paharia bhaiya phaiya da sadar Mani Mahesth da chela devraj Guggia da charia Devi Bhagvati da charia jis vakt Simra jis pukram ayi jisen jogi Simra usa jaga sai.

Translation:

From across the ocean praise to (?) (?)'s son; praise to Mother Kokis and the mountain higher than her mountain whence has come out Baba Kalia, Baba Inciliya, Baba Paharia, and Baba Sindu; Mother Bakli's praise, Brahma Puria's brother Kalambhai's son, maternal grandmother Kubria's higher (?)'s grandson, brothers Paharia's Paharia brother brother's (?), Mani Mahesh's chela, god-king Gugga's disciple, the great Devi's disciple, at which time Simra whose companion came to whom Yogi Simra (did) wake.

MA BIR KIL:

Om bir bir maha bir loha ka sota bajar ki guda tel sandus ke puja om ling hankar Ram Dut jaisa rajar Ram Chandar ka raj sidh kiya, vaisa hamare ka raj sidh karo jangh jangh jankar kil hast kil mast kil chari churail kil dapni sakni kil bhut pasach kil hast kil mast kil baban Bir kil chari churail kil dakni sakni kil sarp ka ding kil mate ka pira kil dhar ka kira kil sapan kil dapan kil base ka kil jair basair kil drist kil mast kil chal chidar kil saru rog kil nau nari bater kil tap trejari kil anant choti kil troja trea trainak kil bara jati bagh kil nau kala nag kil chal chala buter kil phater bhai kil sad did das kil mari masan kil bairi dushman kil amog pira par kire kot ulta usi par pare gungh kare kansi mare sur sail kil kar pare chathi ult hokar mare gangh gangh phut swaha

Translation:

(Note: The meaning of *kil* is "nail". However, as it is used in this *mantra* one suspects that it has additional meanings to do with the power of the object. As I am unsure of these meanings I have retained the word *kil* throughout.)

Om saint saint great saint, stick of iron, the noise ? of thunder, the worship of oil in the Sand ceremony, om, phallus ?, outcry?, outcry?, Hanuman, as King Ram Chandar's task was perfected, in that manner perfect our task, jangh? jangh? jankar? kil, elephant kil, intoxicant kil, female ghost kil, intoxicant kil, the saints kil, female ghost kil, female demons (?) kil, snake's penis ? kil, mother's pain kil, teeth's ants kil, dreams kil, (?) kil, clothes kil, (?) seeing kil, intoxicant kil, (?) (?) (?), fever sickness kil, endless hair strand kil, nine black snakes kil, roving loepard kil, stone brother kil, everything seen kil, dead male ghost's kil, evil (?) enemies kil, ants? on too much? pain ? return and let it strike on him, do ghang ?, (?) cough, strike, (?) (?) a pig by reversing, (?) (?) (?) swaha

These *mantras* seem to be primarily a series of invocations. In the *Paharia Mantar* this invocation proceeds through the relations (both kinship and discipleship) of *Paharia*, calling the deity by invoking his whole realm. The "mountain higher than her mountain" almost certainly refers to Kailash, the abode of Siva, especially since there is a later mention of the *chela* of Mani Mahes, the pilgrimage lake on Mt. Kallas in Chamba which is considered to be Siva's residence. This derivation from Siva, which *Paharla* holds in common with Sindu helps to explain the otherwise anomalous reference to Siva in the *mantras* for *Sindu Baba.*

My translation of the *Ma Bir Kil* is so incomplete as to render any conclusions untrustworthy. However, it is of interest to note that except for a few exceptions only inauspicious powers are called on in the list of *kils.* It is interesting to note the initial invocation of Hanuman, traditionally invoked at the commencement of all new enterprises.

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APPENDIX III

COMPARISON OF MARRIAGE RITUALS

In order to see the Kangra marriage rituals with their local names within the cultural context of Northern India, I have compiled a simplified comparison of the Kangra rituals with those reported for Brahmaur village (50 miles to the north in Chamba), Rampur village (200 miles to the south in Hariyana), and Sirkanda village (200 miles to the east-south-east in U.P. Himalaya). Information for Rampur is taken from Lewis (1958); for Sirkanda from Berreman (1963); and for Brahmaur from Newell (1965), Hutchinson (1910), and personal inquiries. Detailed analysis of the comparative data would be a fruitful source of information in cultural mapping and determining trends in sanskritization and cultural dessemination, but is beyond the scope of this study. At this point I merely with to show the presence of basically similar ceremonies throughout Northern India, and identify the equivalent local nominclature.

Sunhet	**Rampur**	**Bharmaur**	**Sirkanda**
1) *kurmai*	present	present	*mangni*
2) savgan	*sagai*	present	*sagai*
3) *murats*	present	present	present
4) *jater*	not mentioned	not mentioned	not mentioned
5) *samuts*	*bans*	*samuts*	*ban*
6) *sand/tel*	present	*sandi*	present
7) *janeo*	not mentioned	*janeo*	present
8) *kangana*	*kangana*	*kangana*	not mentioned
9) *prasahi*	*bhat*	present	present
10) *tamol*	*neota*	present	*tambol*
11) *janet*	*barat*	*barat*	*barat*
12) *gei*	present	not mentioned	present
13) *milni*	*milni*	not present	not mentioned
14) *rira*	*chunri*	not mentioned	present
15) *bath*	not mentioned	sometimes	not mentioned
16) *lagan*	(*phera*)	*lagan*	(*phera*)
17) *bedi*	(*phera*)	*bedi*	(*phera*)
18) *lavan*	*phera*	*charlai*	*phera*
19) *sirgundi*	*mur khulai*	*sirgundi*	not mentioned
20) *andara*	present	*andrer*	present
21) *guna*	*kangra kelna*	not mentioned	present
22) *gotar mal*	not mentioned	*gotar achar*	*gotra puja*
23) *suratra*	not mentioned	not mentioned	not mentioned
24) *devte pherne*	present	present	present
25) *muklava*	*gauna*	*sudenoj*	*sudenoj*

Aside from discrepancies that probably arise from incomplete information for other areas, perhaps the most significant difference is in the lack of the *milni* in Bharmaur and Sirkanda, as well as the omission of the bath prior to the actual marriage. From comments obtained from informants, these rituals appear for some reason to be more sanskritic, and thus are just coming into these two more remote areas. In part they are substituted for by ceremonies in which the bride herself meets the groom — an action which could not occur in the more purdah-conscious plains and Kangra.

* * *

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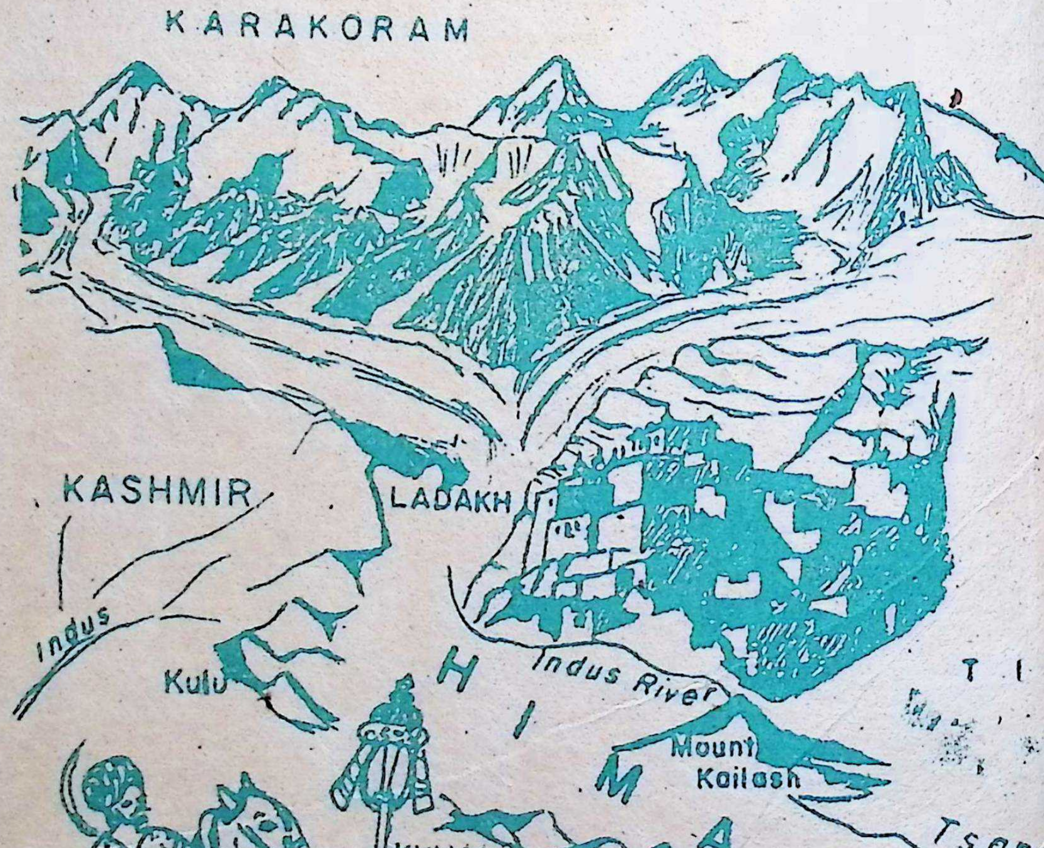
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